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WITH THE ARABS

In Tent

and Town



Rev. A. Forder in Arab Head-gear.

WITH THE ARABS IN TENT AND TOWN

AN ACCOUNT OF MISSIONARY WORK, LIFE AND EXPERIENCES
IN MOAB AND EDM

AND

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY INTO
ARABIA FROM THE NORTH

BY

A. FORDER, EX C.M.S. AND C.M.A.

London

MARSHALL BROTHERS

KESWICK HOUSE, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C

PREFACE

IT is at the request of many friends that I have put together, without any attempt at literary attainment, the contents of this book. In the absence of diaries, memory has had to serve my purpose as far as possible. Popularity is not my object; but if only men and women are stirred up to a lively practical interest in the great missionary work of evangelizing the world, the time and labour expended over these pages will be amply repaid. Thanks are due to the Editor of the *Wide World Magazine* for kindly allowing the reproduction of some of the illustrations from their copyrights; also to other friends for allowing photographs to be used in a similar manner. The bulk of the illustrations are from my own

negatives, and are copyright. Any further information or help I can give is at the disposal of any who apply. Trusting that the contents of the volume may prove interesting and helpful to all, and asking pardon for all errors in putting thoughts into words,

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

ARCHIBALD FÖRDER.

87 Exeter Street,

Salisbury, Wilts.

1902.

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INTRODUCTION

(To whom it may concern.)

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.

DEAR SIR OR MADAME,

This letter introduces Mr. Archibald Forder, who is well known to me. He is a tireless, faithful, devoted Christian worker. He is fearless, and has laboured with indefatigable zeal. He enjoys pioneer and missionary work better than any other man I have ever seen. Only last year (1900) he went alone into the heart of Arabia, and nearly perished because the hardships were so great. He is a regular Livingstone, and if there were still any "unknown continent," Mr. Forder would be the man to open it up to Christianity. In

connection with some established Society, or under the direction of some judicious Board of Trustees, I am sure that Mr. Forder would do most excellent work. His character is above reproach, and in this country he is respected by all who know him.

I remain, yours respectfully,

(HON.) SELAH MERRILL, LL.D.,

U.S. Consul, Jerusalem.

September 23rd, 1901.

With the Arabs



CHAPTER I

Early Life and Leading

ABOUT August, 1874, the quiet town of Salisbury, Wilts, was visited by the late Robert Moffat, the veteran pioneer of African missions. Hundreds flocked to hear the grand old man as he told out in simple boldness the remarkable story of his life and some of his thrilling experiences during his missionary career. Among others in that vast audience that evening was the writer, then a lad of eight years of age, who had been led by a boyish spirit of curiosity to attend the meeting. He was the son of godly parents, of that town, and was then but a schoolboy. One result of that gathering was, that the missionary fire was kindled in that lad's heart never to be put out, although sometimes damped. Outwardly there was nothing that would

even encourage the thought of ever becoming a missionary, but Psalm xxxvii, 4 and 5, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart, commit thy way unto Him, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass," has been fully verified in the experience of the writer, for "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," saith the Lord. Soon after the visit of Dr. Moffat, a missionary from China visited the chapel attended by the lad, and the impressions already made were deepened, and a desire made that China should be the field for service if ever opportunity came of entering the missionary cause. As a lad, collecting for the cause was heartily taken up, the half-holidays of Wednesday and Saturday devoted to certain streets, going from door to door presenting the box and asking something for the missionary cause. Weekly subscribers of a penny or half-penny were waited on on Mondays after morning school. One incident of those collecting days yet lingers in the memory. I presented myself at a house and knocked at the door, with the usual request. The servant took the box in and soon returned, asking me in. I was shown into the drawing room and told to wait until the mistress came to me. She soon appeared and began asking me questions, all of which I answered, evidently to her satisfaction, for she rang the bell, and on the servant coming in told her to bring some refreshment for me. Soon a tray

holding cake, biscuits and wine was brought in and placed on the table, and a glass of the latter poured out and offered me. I had to refuse as I was a teetotaler, but was urged to drink. The refusal resulted in a bottle of lemonade being brought and disposed of along with some of the cake. Then business was resumed, with the result that the box was made heavier and the cause richer by the gift of a half-crown. It turned out later on that my father had at one time done that family a good turn that was long ago forgotten by him, but not by the good woman of that house, as her conduct showed. It was not always thus; more often than not the door was slammed in my face with not always the most polite language. When thirteen years of age I left home and was apprenticed to the grocery and baking business. Thus three years passed in the country, near Wimborne, all the time in touch with Sunday School and Christian work, yet not having definitely decided for Christ. The three years' apprenticeship finished, a short stay at home was made memorable by definitely accepting Christ, at a mission being held at that time and through the patience of a Sunday School teacher. Then off to London for a situation, and thrown in with some fourteen young men, none of them caring anything about Christianity—on the contrary, drunkenness and cursing were the accompaniments to prayers at bed-time. By faithfulness to prayer and the temperance pledge, a change for the better was effected in that establishment. I was

led to attend a Bible-class in connection with St. John's Hill Church at Wandsworth, and for the next nine years was connected with that cause. A vacancy in the Sunday School for "a Juvenile Missionary Secretary was filled by myself for some years. Work among the children, and at missions in the lowest parts of that town was good preparation for service in the future.

In 1888 I married, and the way into the foreign field seemed more closed than ever before, for I had settled down to a business life, having started on my own account, and was prospering very well.

About this time I came into touch with a prominent minister of one of the leading churches, and was strongly led to speak to him about my desire to go into the mission field and work for God. He heard me patiently, and then with grave face addressed me, "I fear you are one of the most unlikely to get into the mission field. Many things are against you; you have no college training, you are married, and you do not come of a ministerial stock," these being his principal objections. I left him quite thinking that there was no possibility of ever working for God in a foreign field, so settled down to do my best in the home field, and for three years worked and waited, all the time keeping in touch with missionary effort and missionaries. How true "My ways are not your ways," as proved in my own life. Man looks at the outward appearance and capabilities, but God looketh on the heart, so let none

despair. My time came at last, and in God's own way. It was nearly three years after my interview with the ministerial sage. I had returned from my duties at Sunday School, and was sitting reading a missionary magazine. It contained an article on Mission Work in Moab, being carried on amidst great difficulty, hardship, and danger by a Mr. Lethaby, his wife, and a young woman helper, Miss Mary Arnold. The article concluded with the statement that a young married man, practical and ready to rough it, was needed to go and help in this work, so that Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby might take a well-earned rest. As I read, a voice seemed to speak to me saying, "That is for you." I could not get rid of it, and after a few days I wrote my impressions to the Secretary of the Kerak Mission, Rev. George Piercy, the result being a visit to us by Mr. Lethaby himself. He put the matter very plainly before us, pointing out the dangers we had to face, and the sacrifice we were making in breaking up our cosy home and disposing of a paying business. Many considerations led the Committee to refuse for a time our application, and Mr. Lethaby returned to Kerak alone. Four months later I heard from Mr. Piercy, the secretary, that if we were still of the same mind the Committee would consider sending us out. Several interviews led to us being accepted; our home and business were disposed of satisfactorily, and we were soon free to go. A few months of practical training in hospitals was given each of us,

and on Wednesday evening, September 2nd, the farewell meeting was held in Bow Road Wesleyan Church. The late Major-General Haig presided over the meeting, and was supported by other gentlemen interested in the Kerak Mission. Rev. George Piercy outlined the method by which the Mission was supported. No money was ever asked for but all needs were supplied. On it being known that Mr. and Mrs. Forder were going to join the Mission more than £60 had been sent in during the past twenty days. They would receive no salary, they would have to live by faith in God. One result of this meeting was, that many were stirred up to prayer on behalf of the Arabs and workers in Moab. Next morning, Thursday, September 3rd, 1891, we left England for our far-away home. We were sent off with many good wishes and the earnest prayers of the godly parents of both of us. In due time we reached Jaffa, and were there joined by Mrs. Lethaby, her husband having come to Port Said to meet us. Jerusalem was reached, and there only remained the four days journey between the Holy City and the capital of Moab, Kerak, our future home. The reader will now understand how I was led to the Mission field, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." And now that nearly eleven years have passed since the call came to me, and many things have come into my life hard to understand, yet I am still sure that it was God's call to me and I have never regretted the

step I took. Although called upon later to leave Kerak, yet I still recall with joy the experiences of the time spent there, at the same time proving that when God thrusts out His servants He goes before them, and although one door closes, another one opens oftentimes leading into a larger field of usefulness. How we reached the Land of Moab and got into Kerak is best told in a letter sent home soon after our arrival there.

“KERAK,

“*October 8th, 1891.*

“DEAR MR. AND MRS. PIERCY,

“We have just heard that some men are leaving here in a few days for Jerusalem, so I will have this letter ready for them to take. You will see, by the above named place, that at last we have arrived at our destination, but only after having passed through experiences enough to take all false missionary fire out of us; but, thank God, our love for the Keraki was, and is still, so strong, that all past experiences cannot move it. Let me now tell you about our journey here from Jerusalem. We left that city on Wednesday morning, September 30th, about eight o'clock: Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby mounted on a camel, and Mrs. F. and myself on another. We moved along like snails, and after having ridden until we were all stiff and tired, we at last persuaded the camel-driver to stop and rest awhile; this he did, but in about ten minutes started again. Oh dear! that day's journey to Jericho is never to be

forgotten—jolting and rocking on the back of a camel, under a scorching sun, it was almost unbearable. At last we sighted Jericho, and safely arrived there fagged out and exhausted. We were taken in and cared for at a large Russian hotel, and after a cup of tea and some bread and jam, we laid down and tried to sleep, but it was too hot to sleep.

“About two next morning we were up and again on the move, starting of course in the dark, away over the plain of the Jordan. Just at day-break we came to the river, and our man having stripped himself, proceeded to ford the Jordan. First he led Mr. and Mrs. L.’s camel over, then he came back for us, then again for his two donkeys—they had to swim—then back again for our packages; these he put on his head, as the water was right up to his neck; it was a pretty sight to see in the early morning light. We rested here about half-an-hour, and feasted on dry native bread—a poor breakfast, but a satisfying one. Then we started over the plain again, aiming at the mountains, but we were a long time getting to the edge of the plain; and so, all day long we were jolted along under the burning sun.

“At last we came to the mountains, and began the ascent—up and down places that seemed impossible for any animal to venture, on the edge of deep precipices, over cliffs, and at last out on to a large plain, when we were told we should soon stay for the night. The hours came and went, and no resting-

place came in sight until sunset, when we reached Medeba, after a journey of fifteen hours. How glad we were to enter the native house of the head man of the place, and lay our tired and weary limbs on the 'laharfs,' or rugs, that they spread for us! Then, in the usual Arab style, they prepared food for us; they killed two fowls and baked them, serving up half a fowl for each, with a large plate of boiled rice each, and an unlimited supply of hot native bread. We ate what was necessary; what was left was given to the visitors, who had flocked in to stare at us. Coffee followed in small cups, holding about a table-spoonful, and as black and strong as possible; no sugar or milk. Then in came several men, who squatted on the ground round us, and commenced to smoke and jabber until we all fell off to sleep. The innumerable fleas kept us employed all night; Kerak is bad enough, but Medeba is dreadful for them. However, we got some snatches of sleep that refreshed us a little.

"Earlier, I ought to have said that part of our luggage left Jerusalem on five mules about two hours before us on the morning we started; these we met at Medeba. Our drivers did not expect to go on to Kerak till Sunday, but about ten o'clock on Friday they said they were going on. So we all left about two p.m.: Mrs. F. and Mr. and Mrs. L. were riding mules, I had a horse. We entered the enemy's country and kept moving on till quite dark, intending to put up at some tents and rest—there were about

forty-five altogether in the *koffel*, or caravan. We were all going on quietly over the plains in the dark, when all at once we were surrounded by ten or twelve of the Hameideh, the tribe through whose territory we were passing. In the starlight they looked fearful fellows, mounted on splendid horses, armed with guns, revolvers, and swords, and, to add to our fear, spears about 12 feet long. They soon separated us all, and drove away the loaded mules allowing us after a while to go on, but not knowing where our luggage was. We were all weary and frightened, but after riding for about an hour we came to a halt, to find some of the mules with the baggage quite safe, and some missing. On we went again until we reached some tents and dismounted to rest for the night. It was about ten o'clock.

"Next morning we were moving again at five, and hoped, before night, to reach Kerak. During the night our missing luggage had turned up. We descended into, and reascended from, the terrible but grand gorge of Mojib, reaching the Kerak side about ten a.m.; here we stayed till sunset, not wishing to expose ourselves and goods to those dreadful thieves, the Mujellis,* into whose territories we had now come. We hid ourselves somewhat under the cover of a large rock, so as not to be seen if anyone should come that way. We had no sooner done this than we heard a noisy wrangle going on among our men. Mrs. L. crept out, and caught sight of the

The robber chiefs of Moab.

long spear of a Sheikh; he had pounced on our caravan, and said his tribe had been robbed of a gun by some of the Kerak men, and so he would claim a mule. After a stormy quarrel he at last drove away the mule on which was loaded our harmonium, beds, and a box of clothing; this we did not know of till half an hour afterwards. I gave up all hope of seeing these things again.

“About sunset we made a start, hoping in six hours to reach Kerak without further overhauling: but this was not to be. We were going along in the dark quietly, when about seven o'clock we were suddenly surprised by a large number of Mujellis, all riding their fine horses, and armed to the teeth. A general stampede ensued, during which we were all separated. They at once drove away the mules, and then began to rob us. We offered short earnest prayers to God for protection and courage, and we felt that God was near us, and able to deliver us. One fellow rode up to me, and started to make the acquaintance of my pockets, but I stoutly resisted him. He then drew out a long dagger and held it in a threatening way over me; I put up my arm and knocked it out of the way of my head and shoulders, then he left off for a time. But on looking round I could see nothing of Mrs. Forder. Presently, I heard her calling away to my right, and although I was being led away by one man, and had two or three others round me, I jumped off my horse, and ran to my wife. She was some 200 yards away from us, with two or three

Arabs round her, in hopes of getting some valuables from her. I pushed past their horses, and soon showed them that such conduct was improper. Then they followed the others, I walking by the side of my wife. Many times they asked me to ride, and one got off his horse for me to mount, but I would not leave Mrs. Forder's side. All this time we did not know where Mr. and Mrs. L. were. After an hour's ride we came to tents, and were put into one for show; the men, and women too, came crowding in to stare at us; then I suppose it occurred to them that we were hungry, so they asked by signs if we would eat. We nodded; and very soon they baked us some large, thin cakes of bread, which were very good; then they made us coffee. Still we knew nothing of our boxes, or of Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby.

"In about an hour's time, one man came and made us understand that we were to go to a tent where Mr. and Mrs. L. were; so we followed him and found them again. They had just been led to the tent of their captors, but had refused to sit down, or eat and drink, until we were brought to them. In came the Sheikh, surrounded by his sons and retinue, and opened negotiations with Mr. and Mrs. L., we not understanding a word. At last they said they would not let us go until they were paid sixty mejedies, nearly £11; this we refused, and made up our minds to stay the night, and probably all the next day, which was Sunday. At last, after prayer to God for deliverance, we laid down on some mats



Arab Sheikh.

and fell asleep. Early next morning we found some of our boxes laying about the camp at anyone's mercy. In two hours time (eight o'clock) they began to move their tents, and we plainly saw that we must do something, or else we should be minus everything we possessed. So at last we promised to pay the money, and they engaged to send three men to escort us to Kerak.

"After getting together our boxes, we made another start. In an hour and a half we were again accosted by some more Arabs; they allowed all to pass except my wife and myself. After some angry and loud wrangling, our three protectors got us away. We moved on till we came up with the others—on for two hours more, and we reached Kerak at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, October 4th, all very weary, faint, and tired out, having had no food for fifteen hours. This was our first journey in the Land of Moab. Through it all Mrs. Forder never showed any outward signs of fear or terror, and as for myself, God just built me up for the time of need. Surely "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." All* our things have come safely, some at one time and some at another, including those that were taken away on the mule previous to the last attack on us.

"Now that we are in Kerak, (thanks to Miss Arnold) we are far better housed than we expected; we are next door to Mr. Lethaby's. It is one large

*See Postscript.

room like theirs, but comfortable. We have fixed up our boxes, and made tables and seats, and so, for a time, shall content ourselves until our other things come from Jerusalem.

“The whole city has been in an uproar in consequence of our arrival, but we now hope things will quiet down. All the sons of the Sheikh, as well as himself, are craving for money; Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby are quite knocked up because of it all. I have helped each morning with the sick people, and on Wednesday rode out to an encampment to see several people that were ill. I gave medicines to more than forty people, and very thankful they were. I returned quite tired, having been away seven hours. I am so glad I came here. The boys in the school are such nice little fellows, so well behaved; I wish I could talk to them in their own tongue.

“I am glad to say Mrs. Forder is quite well. She was worn out by the fatigue of our journey, but after a good rest she is now herself again, and is busy with her needle fixing up our little beds. I must now conclude this long epistle. Please give our united love to Mrs. Piercy, and to the friends at the Friday night’s meeting. We are very much taken with Miss Arnold, and am sure we shall all work heartily together. Accept kind regards from

“Yours faithfully,

“ARCHIBALD FORDER.

“Saturday, October 10th, 1891.”

“P.S.—Since writing the first part of this letter, we find that a good many of our smaller packages have suffered severely at the hands of the robbers who detained us at night. Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby are considerable losers; someone cut open his hand-bag, and from it stole forty-eight mejedies, equal to £10. They quite spoilt a bagful of clothing belonging to Mrs. L.; and also stole some things we were bringing for Miss Arnold. Stores, too, are missing; in fact we cannot exactly state what we have lost.

“Many thanks are due to Miss Arnold for getting us the place in which we live; she settled all with the landlord, and got him to clean it up for us. Over our porch, on the whitewash, she inscribed, ‘*Welcome Home*;’ and inside on the wall the beautiful words, ‘*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.*’ She had a very trying time whilst Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby were away; one man having threatened over and over again to cut her throat, but she dared all danger.

“Again, good-bye! Glad to say Mr. L. is a little better, although extremely weak and poorly. The evening is fast coming on, and we all pray for ‘*Peace, perfect peace*’ to be upon us during the coming Sabbath.—A.F.”

This letter will give the reader some idea of our reception in the Land of Moab. It was however only a foretaste of things to come. To get to Kerak in the early days of that mission was no easy matter. Now that the Turks are established there it is quite

safe, although, as it always must be, somewhat fatiguing. The following letters will tell how difficult as well as dangerous was the journey years ago.

LETTER FROM MISS ARNOLD.

"JERUSALEM,

"August 15th, 1893.

"TO MAJOR GENERAL HAIG,

"DEAR SIR,

"Knowing you take such interest in all our movements and work both in and out of Kerak, I thought you would also be interested in my last journey from our mountain home to the Holy City; and more especially so, as you yourself have also been over part of the road by which I came, viz:—through the Ghôr Es-Safeah and Hebron.

"The road through Mojib and Medeba being just then closed on account of fighting between the Anazi and Beni Succor, we made arrangements for me to go with some Hebron merchants who trade between Kerak and Hebron. Not knowing them very well, we thought it wiser to take one Greek Christian man with whom I had travelled before. We were to have started at midnight on Friday, July 14th, but my man (Saleh) did not come for me until 3.30 a.m. Saturday. We were fairly off by 4 o'clock, and well out of Kerak by sunrise. We did not take the road you and Mrs. Lethaby took four years ago; but went due south through

El-Mota and Khanazera, because, on their way to Kerak, these Hebron men had been attacked by robbers, and had one of their mules shot dead. They (our men) had only five guns (native made), and the robbers five Martini-Henri's. They kept up the firing on both sides for three hours; so no wonder they did not want to return by the same road.

"We reached Khanazera at noon or a little after, but did not stay, except to refill our water skins. But I must not forget to tell you that at El-Mota, where is an encampment of Keraki—the Seriri—I saw that poor 'Attowy' boy Ede, who was in our school a short time; the one who lost his foot from a snake bite. He recognised me at once, and a broad smile spread over his black but intelligent face. With true Bedoui instinct, the poor child can't be happy for any length of time in a city, but longs for perfect freedom of tent life. I expect he will come back to us again some time. But to continue: our caravan consisted of twenty men, about forty donkeys and mules, one horse, and 500 sheep and goats. As it turned out, it was very foolish to try and take sheep through the Ghôr in the middle of July.

"The first day we did very well. Just after passing Khanazera, Saleh's mule began to kick, threw him off, and continued kicking, until there was nothing left on its back. Soon after this, we stopped for about half an hour to rest and take

some refreshment. We made tea, and I was not the only one who was glad of a cup. This was just before the actual descent into the Ghôr Es-Safeah began. We sat on one little green patch of ground, where was a little brackish water oozing out of the mountain side, and where there were thousands of hornets quite as thirsty as ourselves evidently. There were a few rank reeds growing, over which Saleh threw our *abbas* (cloaks), and made a little tent to shelter me from the sun. Soon the sheep caught us up, and on we went. We could not ride far, as the steep descent began. I rode until my mule fell down, when I managed to quietly slide off on to a big boulder of rock just near. After that, in mercy to the poor creature, I was obliged to walk. It was dreadfully hot, and I could not hold up a sunshade and scramble down these mountains, for the descent was worse than that of Mojib. But if it was trying to me, it was very much worse for the poor sheep and donkeys. The latter kept falling under their loads. After about four hours of this steep descent we came to a small table-land half way down, and the sun having set, we camped. We were too tired even to make tea; but after eating a little bread and chocolate and drinking a cup of goat's milk, I lay down on my *lahaf* (a quilt stuffed with sheep's wool) with saddlebags for a pillow, — not much softer than Jacob's stone—and tried to sleep; but, alas! the heat was too great. Not a breath of air was stirring. After twisting and

turning about for some time I managed to get a few hours' sleep.

"By 3.30 the next morning, we were on the move again; and the air was delightful until the sun rose. I cannot pretend to describe the scenery. It was not beautiful or lovely, but grand and overaweing. The rocks as a rule were of red sandstone, worn into all imaginable and sometimes weird shapes and forms by the action of sun and weather. I could almost talk to those grand old mountains. How sadly I wanted to ask them how long they had stood there alone in their solitary grandeur. In some places they were beautifully veined with a lighter or darker shade, and now and then one would suddenly find oneself at the foot of or entrance to some apparently fairy or ghostly castle or stronghold. Some rocks looked for all the world like immense tables with beautifully and delicately turned legs. I could but exclaim with David, 'Oh Lord! how wonderful are Thy works!' Could a *human* mind ever devise such awful grandeur as this, and yet such terrible solitude? Down, down, down! The Dead Sea looked so near, and yet we kept skirting round and round ever freshly appearing mountains.

"At last though, we really did reach the plain, and were immediately met by a dozen or so of half-dressed, black-looking Ghowarina. At once, when they saw me they said I was a 'Consul,' and were very much surprised to hear me say in Arabic that

I was no Consul, but only a schoolmistress from Kerak. Here we re-mounted, and rode along with these well-mounted rag-bags (for the poor things were wretchedly clothed) for about another hour. All that hour they were trying to quarrel with our men (who would not quarrel), to take by force some of their loads. But our Sheikh, whose name was Abd-as-Salam (the Servant of Peace), joked with them, and told them he was not only of a peaceable name, but also of a peaceable mind, and did not intend to quarrel. They took one sheep and killed it, upon which our men made no comment. Then two or three of the raggedest of them rode up to me (they looked so ridiculous mounted on beautiful mares), and asked for 'baksheesh.' I said, 'From where, my brothers, should I have baksheesh, coming from Kerak?' at which they grinned and fell back.

"Here we came to fresh water, of which the poor animals had not tasted since leaving Khanazera. The stream was narrow and rapid. The poor sheep rushed headlong into it, and the others pushing on from behind, fifteen were washed away and drowned before the shepherds could get to them. About an hour after noon we came to the Ghôwarina encampment where we found another Hebrôn merchant with a bush shed for his shop. He received us very kindly, and it was much cooler in his shed than in the tents. I was very tired, and I need not say, in a bath of perspiration. They put my *lahaf* down

and in a very short time brought us a bowl of beautiful grapes and some thin wafer bread baked on an iron pan over the fire. This, with a cup of tea afterwards, in which all joined, was very refreshing. Then I lay down, and covering my face with the muslin on my hat, in spite of the unbroken babel of voices, I slept. After about two hours, it suddenly occurred to my man to clear all the people out, in order that the 'Sitt' might sleep! Of course, the sudden cessation of noise awoke me.

"By 3.30 p.m. we were all up and off again. We made straight for the Dead Sea, about half way between the root of the Lesan and the southern coast. Here it was a great stretch of dry sand, with the exception of, at intervals, three streams of salt water running pretty swiftly from north to south; for at the south end we could see a considerable area of sea; and yet I should think dry land stretched some three or four miles on either side of us. First, however, we had to cross a stream I was going to say,—it was not water, but bog,—the nastiest filthiest stuff you could imagine. I drew in my mule until I saw how my fellows fared. The men caught hold of my animal's head, and proceeded—as I thought—to lead it through; but when they got ankle deep they threw the rope up to me, and ~~let~~ him go. Just at that moment, what lively and vivid visions I had of finding myself quietly landed in the middle of that bog! However, the men shouted, and I vigorously poked my mule and held

on through all his flounderings, till we finally emerged safe and sound on the other bank. Some of the donkeys collapsed in the middle, and then the shouting and lifting and pulling were most vigorous. It was quite exciting to stand and watch them. The third and last stream of salt water we crossed was considerably above the mule's knees, and the western bank steep and slippery. Many of the donkeys slipped right back into the water; and it took some time to get them all across. But, the sheep and goats, poor things,—they were tired out, and the shepherds had to stand in a string across the stream, and pass them over from one to the other. Otherwise they would have been washed away, as it was deep for them and pretty swift.

"We got across the actual bed of the Dead Sea in a couple of hours and then cut straight inland. About 8 p.m. we had ascended to a small plateau, where we camped for our third night. During this day's journey about six or eight sheep and goats had died from the heat. One beautifully fat, full-grown sheep was done up and could not go on, so they killed it, and we had it for supper. It was piteous to look at several of the loaded animals, and one or two well-grown kids, which were fagged out. They lay over the load almost like dead things, now and then bleating faintly.

"I must tell you how they cooked our supper of mutton. First they built an oven of stones, and then lighted a fire inside. When the stones were very

hot, they took away the fire, put the meat in and closed down the oven with stones and earth to keep the heat in. After about two hours of baking, the meat is done. As I did not want to wait for my supper and sleep to such a late hour, one of the men took the liver, kidneys, and sweetbread, and putting it on the ramrod of his gun, frizzled it over the fire for me. It was very nice. Here, too, we were able to get from a fountain about half-a-mile from our camping ground good *cold* water, which was a rare treat. A little of the water we had brought from the other side of the Ghôr was left, and they were going to pour it away when I asked for it to wash my hands and face. They were so amused that I should think a wash in a cupful of water so precious, and more especially so at my soap, towel, and comb.

“During that day I had noticed that one of the young Hebron men, who had often been to us in Kerak for medicine, had his head tied up as they do for headache, and that he did not look well, so when we camped, I told my man to ask him if he would like some medicine. He was very grateful, and swallowed it down obediently. The next day he was very much better.

“By 2 a.m. (this was Tuesday) we were off again by starlight. In about an hour we came to a most remarkable defile called the Wady In-Nakhbar. It was so narrow at first—and for some time—that we could only go in single file. The cliffs rose up sheer

on either side to a height of, I should think, from 100 to 200 feet, white like chalk. In many places we could scarcely hear the tread of the animals—it might have been a caravan of camels, for the noiseless way in which we plodded along and by starlight. In other places the ground sounded hollow and unreal. Just at sunrise we had descended again to the level of the sea, within a short distance of Jebel Usdum; but instead of going between it and the sea we turned sharp off up to the 'Zewirel-foke,' right away up to Masada. There the ruins are most remarkable, as you know, rising up so sheer from the top of that little mountain, and commanding the whole of the valley right down to the Dead Sea. There we camped for the three hottest hours of the day. The water there is simply what is caught in the rains. While the men were down below filling the skins, and we were waiting for them with as much patience as thirst and heat under the noonday sun would allow, I tried to sleep a little, but it was too hot.

"By noon we were off again. In a couple of hours or so, we reached some very good water-springs, an hour or an hour and a half south of Hebron, after passing through Karmel and Ziph. Here we unloaded, had a good drink, made some 'damper,' ate, drank again, loaded up, and jogged on to Hebron, which we reached about 5.30 p.m. Abd es-Salam took me straight to his house in the heart of the city (near to the Cave of Machpelah),

where I slept. They of course were Moslems, but exceedingly kind, and gave me a beautifully clean, native bed on the floor. Next morning I did not wake until late, and as soon as possible, asked Abd es-Salam to let his son go with me to Mr. and Mrs. Murray's house. This he did, and no sooner did Mr. and Mrs. Murray know who I was than they received me like their own sister, and would insist upon getting breakfast for me and keeping me there. In the afternoon we all went up together to the Mildmay ladies. There, too, all were very kind. That night I slept at Mrs. Murray's. Oh, how refreshing it is to meet and hold converse with such holy children of our Master ! Mrs. Murray was a great blessing to my soul. Their presence in Hebron ought to be more widely known, as they are entirely dependent upon what their Heavenly Father sends them. Truly God chooses the weak things of this world to confound the wise.

"The next day (Thursday) I stayed with the Mildmay ladies until 10 p.m., when once again my men came for me, as we had arranged to ride on to Jerusalem in the night for the sake of coolness. This we did, reaching Jerusalem at sunrise, Friday morning ; and Mrs. Reardon's Welcome Home of Rest at 5.30 a.m., Friday, the 21st of July.

"Sincerely yours,

"MARY ARNOLD."

WITH THE ARABS

FROM MISS ARNOLD.

“ KERAK,

“ MOAB,

“ *April 23rd, 1891.*

“ MY DEAR MR. PIERCY,

“ I am thankful to tell you I arrived here safely on Tuesday morning last at sunrise. You will be sorry to hear that Mr. Lethaby has on and off, during the last three months, been very unwell, in fact in great agony at times. One of the old Mujellis, too, has been very trying. But God has given just enough strength to them to hold on. The saddest blow of all, and it was and is a heartrending experience for us each, is that six of our boys have left us, and now are like boys possessed—throwing stones, abusing, and cursing us. Three months ago those very boys came down the Wady to see me off, crying all the way, and saying how I should find them all good boys and at school when I returned. One little fellow, yesterday afternoon, came to see me, but the others all keep away. But I will not dwell on this, only to beg the prayers of all our friends for these dear lads who know the Truth, and have fallen under the power of the evil one.

“ As you know, before this reaches you, I left Jerusalem on Thursday morning, the 16th inst., on a donkey, the boxes on two camels and one donkey. We reached Jericho at 3.15 p.m. With the light of the morning star, at 4.15 the next morning we

started, reaching the place where the bridge used to be at six o'clock. They have fixed up a flat-bottomed almost square big boat, and pull it across by ropes fixed on each bank. I was standing on the bank watching them getting in, across, and out, some donkeys and wheat, when I was startled by hearing myself called to (in English) from the other side. I looked over, and there was a lady on horseback; my first thought was, 'Mrs. Lethaby,' but that moment up rode the unmistakable form of Mr. Gray Hill! By the next boat they came over. I *was* glad to see them. They had intended staying with the Beni Succor (Skour) three weeks, but owing to the fighting which is going on between the Skour and Hameidah, they were obliged to come back after a week. It was a most providential meeting. With them was the Sheikh of the Adwan, and they insisted upon giving him up and paying him a napoleon to go with me to Medeba. Was it not good of them? They were desperately afraid for me, and made me promise I would not leave Medeba, except with a large *koffel*.

"A little way across the Jordan we came to a veritable slough of despond, nasty greeny-black water and slush. The animals refused to enter. I quite sympathised^o with them, for it looked as though you might sink to any depth. Before I had time to think, one of the men (a young giant and a Moslem) whipped me up into his arms, tucked up his clothes, and began to carry me through. It was hard work,

and made him puff, as his footing was so uncertain and slippery. All of a sudden down went one of his legs, down, down, down; he staggered, slipped, held me up nearly on his shoulders, and finally just managed to regain his balance. He had gone in nearly up to his thigh. One of my feet went in, too, and the end of my dress; but I was very thankful, as I *quite* expected we should fall together, and have a good ducking in this filthy quagmire. I inwardly resolved not to shout, but to keep my mouth shut; for however the external man may be, I did not relish the idea of eating and drinking that compound. However, we all got through safely, and were none the worse.

“From Medeba, which we reached at sundown, I sent back the saddle by the camel man, and a letter to Miss Barlee. That same evening came a Kerak Greek Christian to me (the Sheikh of his family, and a nice man) to say if I liked he would take me and the boxes to Kerak. So we arranged all (after interminable talk of course), and were to start Monday morning. On Saturday someone told me that the son of Sheikh Marah at Medeba had letters for me. I went April 20th, and found he had two letters for me, one from Mrs. Lethaby, and one from Harab (one of the boys). I was very glad to get them, I can tell you. They had been written a fortnight before. I should like to describe to you the polite manner in which the best ‘laharfs’ were brought down and arranged for me to recline upon



Arabs of Moab

in regular Eastern fashion—how all the possible and impossible compliments were paid me, how clumsily I managed to pay them back, how they thought I did not love them because I said “No, thank you,” when they wanted to make coffe, but finally accepted tea to prove I was their friend (as it did not take half the time to make that coffee does), and then how they talked!—especially were they full of the news from the ‘seat of war’ between the Skour and Hameideh. On Monday by 6 a.m. we were off; by seven we came to some Christian tents, and there our company swelled from four or five to about forty souls, to say nothing of loose donkeys. My sun hat was tied up in a pillowcase, and slung over my mule’s back; and I was dressed in an ‘Abbah’ (long black goat’s hair garment), and a dark blue mendile (large handkerchief) over my head, so as to be disguised from the Hameideh, whose country we were to pass through in the broad daylight.

“A little farther on, we came to a Hameideh camp, and from there took with us one of the Sheikhs as a safeguard and guide to the banks of the Arnon (Mojib). I was riding a very good surefooted mule, and did not get off all the way down and up the other side of Mojib. About half an hour before sundown we reached the top, and I knew we were then within eight hours of Kerak, so did not hurry. My man, Salami, had lost a donkey in Mojib, so had to go back for it. All the rest of us waited. The sun

went down, and it began to get cold. The men lighted a fire, and we all gathered round. To pass the time the men began to perform a Bedouin dance with clapping and singing. It was most weird by the light of the newly risen moon, and the dying embers of the fire. About seven I was getting my three loaded and one riding mules together ready to start, when up came the recreant Salami. On the way we passed several camps of tents ('beit shar,' house of hair, as the tent cloth is woven by the women from goats' hair), and at each dropped some of our fellow travellers. At 10.30 p.m. we came to the 'Gassah,' the remains of an old castle. We all dismounted and unloaded to let the animals have a little rest and grass. In the meantime, I (by the bright light of the moon) explored the castle alone. The stones are immense; and I was especially struck with the sections of pillars which were strewn in every direction. These were the shape of immense grind stones, about six or nine feet in circumference, by from two to three feet in diameter. The men lighted a fire, and lay coiled up around, and in five minutes they were all asleep. The dew was very heavy, so you may guess I did not let them sleep long. At 12.30 I caught my own mule, and saddled him up, and then began the business of waking the men. Poor fellows, they were very tired, for we had been going for eighteen hours already, and both Moslems and Christians are fasting. After a considerable amount of pushing,

pulling, calling, and telling them in their own way, 'dinier tho-hoor' (the world is noon), they roused at last, and loaded up. By the time we got to 'Rabbah' (Ar of Moab), another donkey was missing, and back went Salami again. 15.600

"*April 21st.*—All the other men calmly dismounted, lay down, and were asleep directly. In a few minutes came along a man driving a cow. The incident seemed rather extraordinary; so, standing on the other side of my mule, and, as I thought, effectually disguised under my mendile and abbah, listening very attentively to the few words he had with the only one of our party who was awake beside myself, I heard quite enough to rouse me to immediate action. He was a Mujelli servant, and was then going straight to their tents, which were only a few hundred yards away. I knew what that meant. In a quarter of an hour all the Mujellis would know I was coming through with three loaded mules. Not heeding the free and easy remonstrances of some of our men whom I had aroused, I left my riding mule, and myself, with an umbrella for a stick, drove on the three others. Just then the moon set, and the morning star peeped up. I was desperate, as I knew how short was now the time before the sun would rise. How devoutly I prayed that I should reach Kerak before the unwelcome sunlight revealed my presence; oh! it was dark, but I was very thankful, although I nearly fell several times over rocks and stones in the road

while playing my new role of muleteer. Do you think those three animals would keep together? Not a bit of it! But I succeeded in getting them to the mountain facing Kerak (now only the Wady between us and our goal) by the grey dawn.

“One of the men had now caught me up, and begged and beseeched that I would ride into Kerak. He even held my arm in his earnestness. He did not want people to see me driving the mules. But I turned round and told him that he had yet to learn that when an English woman *said* a thing, she *meant* it, at which he used a not very pious ejaculation. However, at the bottom of the Wady I left him to bring on the animals, and I came up a short way to announce our safe arrival. As I reached our house, the sun rose. I *did* have a warm welcome, I can tell you. Nearly all the time I have been away Mr. Lethaby has been *very* unwell indeed with dreadful neuralgia, &c. You cannot be as thankful as we are that God brought the boxes and me through the lion's den safely. A few days after came Simiene Mujelli here for medicine, and he says (and we think truly) he stopped the Mujellis that night from coming out to me. He has been our greatest persecutor, and has stolen many things from Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby. He has said he would not rest until he has killed Mr. L.; but now he says he repents, and wants to be our friend, and he certainly seems much subdued. It seems almost too good to be true. I only hope it will last.

"May 6th.—Now only a minute to close. Please thank Mrs. Piercy for her long letter to Mrs. Lethaby. Mrs. L. sends her love, and will write soon. At present she is seeing to a sick boy who has been here all day.

"With kind love to all, in haste,

"Sincerely yours,

"MARY ARNOLD."

These letters show that the journey to and from Kerak was both dangerous and fatiguing. Now, however, that is past. The establishment of Turkish troops in Medaba and Kerak, and the making of a good road have improved matters considerably, and now the journey can be undertaken without any fear of molestation.

CHAPTER II

Life and Work in Kerak

THE second day after arriving in Kerak I commenced to work, helping all I could. Medical aid was given to numbers of Arabs every morning—in this I was able to help—then I went to the homes of the sick and did what I could for them ; this made me be much among the natives, and with the aid of one of the boys from the school that knew English very well, I soon learned and began to use some Arabic words. Making tables, stools, cupboards, &c., from packing cases, took some of my time, and added to our scanty comforts. A few weeks after I reached Kerak I was able to do a good turn to some Arabs near by, thus showing the people that I was among them for their good, and not for any advantage to myself personally. A letter sent home about that time will perhaps speak better than trusting to memory.

LETTER FROM MR. FORDER.

“KERAK, MOAB,

“*January 8th, 1892.*

“DEAR MR. PIERCY,

“I am quite sure you will be interested in what I am going to tell you, it being a little experience of mine which was not altogether unpleasant, although not very comfortably situated. We cannot in this country have all we would wish to help us to carry out our work; but I am beginning to find out that under any circumstances, I can by God's aid and guidance make myself useful. I have in the work here to put my hand to other things beside giving medicine, as the following will show. I went to a house to see a little boy who was very bad with fever and ague, and whilst I was there they said he was hungry, in the state he was he could not eat the native messes, so the mother brought out some rice, and asked me if he could eat any of it. I said yes, and she began to give it to him raw. I took it from her, and picking up a small pan put in the rice, and showed them how to boil it. For an hour nearly I knelt over the fire and smoke so that the rice should be well done; and then I had to feed the poor boy, and he quite enjoyed it. I have sometimes to make up a bed, and make my patient comfortable; the women have no idea of doing this.

“But now for my latest movements:—On Monday, December 14th, we heard that a severe fight had

taken place between some Kerak men and those of a neighbouring tribe; the latter being a very ferocious and wild set of people. In the fight eight men were killed, and the next day brought into the city to be buried. Then we heard that many were wounded, and three likely to die. On Wednesday morning two men came to our house and asked if we would give them medicine to take out to the encampment, where they were lying unable to move. Whilst I and Mrs. Lethaby were talking with these two men, a messenger came from our head Sheikh, saying that he was in the city and wanted to see me at once; so, with one of the English speaking lads, I went up to him and found him with his sons and several more, sitting on a house-top holding a council. I shook hands with them all round, and then took a seat by the side of our king. He said to me, through the lad who was with me, that it was his wish that I should go out to these wounded men and doctor them. It was five hours' ride right out in the wilderness, some twenty miles away. He said I should be well protected and provided for as regards food. I told him, in reply, that I was quite ready and willing to go, but first I must go and talk it over with Mrs. Lethaby and Mrs. Forder, and then I would come and give him my answer. He said I was to take a boy out of our school named Mahommed Nablous, to interpret for me, as this boy speaks English very well. I came back and told Mrs. Lethaby what

the Sheikh's wishes were, and she said I had better go and do what I could for the poor fellows ; so we sent word that I would be ready to go in a short time.

"After eating some food, for Mrs. Forder got me a hasty meal whilst I packed my knapsack with medicines and instruments which I thought I should most likely require, I made my way up into the city, accompanied by Mrs. L., who came to see me start. In a few minutes a horse was brought for me and a mule for my boy, and away we went with two wild looking men, quite intending to return on the morrow. It was a very long ride, and tiring as well, up the hills and over mountains, down into deep valleys and across never-ending plains, until just before sunset (5 p.m.) we came upon the camp of about ninety tents pitched in a valley. I was very glad to get off my horse and stretch my legs, but I was anxious to do what I could for the sufferers before dark, so asked where they were, and also for the man that was wounded the most. I was taken to a large tent in which lay a man who had nine wounds from guns, spears, swords, and daggers, and it was evident to me that I needed the knowledge of a fully qualified surgeon for the task that was before me. As I stood over the man and saw the cuts from the sword, some six inches long, and the gunshot wounds, I shook and trembled like a leaf, but offering up a short and silent prayer to my Master in Heaven for courage

and wisdom for the task, I set to work to sew up and bandage one place after another, until the poor man was a little more comfortable than before. All the time I was doing this I was surrounded by some seventy or eighty men and women who were surprised to see me sew up the open cuts. I then asked for the next man. Although it was now dark, I said I would do the three men that were so badly hurt, but they quickly told me there were twenty-two like the one I had just seen. Of course I could not attend to all of them that evening; so doing my utmost for three I went back to my first patient, and asked for something to eat. They said I was to sleep in this tent, and then they set about making bread for me and the lad; this was made in large thin cakes, and was very good. They gave us three eggs to eat with the bread. I asked for water so that I could make some tea, but what they brought was like mud, and I could not use it, so we had to go without. However, in a short time a man came in with some sheep's milk, and we gladly drank some of it; this was our evening meal. Whilst we were sitting round the fire I told my boy to ask if we should read to them from God's Book. Some said yes; so having an Arabic copy of Deuteronomy and of Matthew with me, I told Mahommed to read the Commandments, and I said a few words to accompany them; some of the men were attentive, others only mocked and laughed at us.



Bedouin Tent, 1st House of Hair.

“In this tent there was the usual Arab mixture, and visitors are supposed to make themselves quite at home amongst it all. Let me describe to you what the varied inmates of our tent were:—men, women and children, goats, kids, sheep, lambs, dogs and puppies, two donkeys, three cows and one calf, two horses and one mule, and fowls without number. Now you will guess that, with the varied noises from all these that I did not care about the situation, and outside the tent were hundreds of goats and sheep contributing to the noise. About eight o'clock the owner of the tent asked if I wanted to sleep, and as I was very tired, I said yes, so he laid a thin rug over some dry heather and grass, and motioned me to lie down and sleep. After having silently prayed to God for protection, Mahommed and I laid down without a covering and tried to sleep; but the groans and cough of the sick man, the coarse laughing and shouting of the men and women, and the different animals inside and out, made sleep almost impossible. At last I did fall into a good sleep and had forgotten all my surroundings, when I felt someone shaking me; opening my eyes, I saw the man who was ill being held up on his legs by several men, and, on awaking my lad, found out that they said ‘he had a pain and wanted medicine’; they thought it would do him good to walk him about. I quickly made them lay him on his rude bed, and told them that was the way to kill him; giving him a sleeping draught, I

again laid down and tried to sleep, but the wind had risen in great force and was blowing through the tent, and it was very cold. At last I again fell off to sleep, and was enjoying it, when another good shaking aroused me, to find that the rain was coming down in torrents and dripping through on me; there was quite a pool in the place where I was lying. For the rest of the night I sat over the fire listening to the wind and rain, and again and again wished that I was safe in our humble abode at Kerak.

“At last the morning dawned, but with it no improvement in the elements. Having eaten some bread and drank some milk, I told them I would see the other wounded. I dare not attempt to describe the awful state of the poor men; every one of them needed the care and attention of the best hospital in the world. However, God made me useful to them, and I carefully washed, sewed up, and bandaged all their wounds. Some of them were very thankful and kissed me over and over again; also some of their mothers and wives gave me raisins and prunes and other things to eat. By the time I had finished, the rain was over, and I asked to be taken back to the city as arranged, but not one man would move to go with us,^o so I said I would walk. They all said I was to stay until the wounded men were well, and they should not let me go away from the tents. They also said that our ruling Sheikh told them I was to stay ten days; this

was a lie, and I told them so. Then the rain began to pour down again and I and my lad started to walk to Kerak, and set off up the hill. When we reached the top some twenty of the men came running after us, and took by force my boy away from me, and one man (who afterwards proved a true friend) took off his large 'abbe' or coat and put it over me to keep me dry. Then three or four of them pushed and carried me back to the camp, and put me in the tent where I had slept the night before.

"This tent was a miserable shelter; and the man who covered me with his coat seemed to understand that I was not as comfortable as possible, so he took me away over another hill, and we came on about twelve more tents, in one of which he lived. Here he put plenty of rugs for me to lie on, and then told the women to make a big fire, to warm and dry me. Next he asked what I would eat; should they kill a sheep, goat, lamb, or kid; anything that 'was in my heart' he would do for me. I asked for a fowl, and some salt and onions; these were quickly brought in, and I cleaned and cooked this fowl in my own way, without any native messes. They baked me bread, and Mahommed and I made a decent meal, after which my Arab friend made me coffee with sugar and milk in it. We found out afterwards that this man had lived in Damascus and Beyrout, and had seen a little of European ways and manners.

"After we had eaten, we went round to the worse

of the patients and made them easy. One man had his nose cut clean off, and his mother produced this severed member for me to sew on again, but I could not comply with her request, although she entreated me to do so. Night came on, and I was made very comfortable by the fire. I asked if we should read to them from God's book; they assented, and my lad read, and I explained the Commandments, and a few verses from St. Matthew; they were very attentive. Afterwards they began to question me on many subjects: How much money did I have to pay for my wife? Where was my sword, dagger, gun, and spear? To the first I replied, 'English people did not buy their wives.' To the other question I said that, 'God was stronger than man, and He took care of me.' They could not realise this, and one man offered to give me his pistol. Questions followed about the Queen; then they asked 'whether the people in my country had such nice tents to live in as they had?' And I had to tell them of the large and beautiful houses we had in England. At a late hour I fell asleep, and slept till daybreak, when I arose; having eaten some bread, and drunk some milk, I prepared to walk to Kerak. I looked round for my Arab friend, but he had gone away with some flocks. Then one well-dressed man came up and said if I would go and see his brother and dress his wounds, he would take us both to Kerak. I did so, and then looked for my man, but he was missing; three times I had been



An Arab Collecting Salt in the Desert.

treated like this, so I determined to set out, as there was every prospect of a fine day. Again we climbed to the top of the hill, some thirty or forty men shouting after us to come back; then they tried again to force us back. In the middle of the struggle my Arab friend suddenly appeared. I believe God sent him just then. He quickly scattered the ravening wolves, and said he would take us to the city. As he had only just recovered from an attack of fever, he said he must go back to the camp and get a horse. Leaving his 'abba,' pipe, big boots, and head-dress, as a pledge of his return, away he went, and in a quarter of an hour returned and we started for Kerak. After about three hours walking over ploughed ground and soft turf, we came in sight of the old castle at Kerak, but still two hours' ride from us. My lad said, 'See Mr. Forder, the castle, I am very joyful!' So was I, and sang in real earnest the beautiful hymn, commencing:—

As when the weary traveller gains
The height of some o'erlooking hill,
His heart revives if 'cross the plains
He sees his home, though distant still.

“We plodded on, passing two hyenas and some foxes, and about three in the afternoon reached Kerak. Our return caused quite a commotion, but all seemed glad to see me again. Thus ended my visit to the Arab encampment. Though rather

rough and unpleasant, yet it was an experience that I can now look back upon with pleasure. To be used by God to help those poor ignorant people is an honour!

“With one or two little incidents I will close. When the man who went to Jerusalem with Mr. Lethaby returned, the news was brought to Mrs. L. by one of the boys in the school; the little fellow was so pleased to hear that Mr. Lethaby was better that he at once went to the house of another boy, and together they knelt down and repeated the Lord’s prayer in Arabic and English as a thanksgiving. Our hearts sunk within us when we learnt that Saleh had brought nothing back for any of us, so all our Christmas messages will have to serve for Easter!

“We had a very happy and pleasant Christmas Day together. We woke in the morning to find everything covered with snow, which continued to fall till it was eighteen or twenty inches deep. Mrs. Forder and I dined with Mrs. Lethaby and Miss Arnold, and spent the rest of the day together. We also had a watchnight service, so that we felt in touch with far-away friends. New Year’s Day was very cold and wet; the rain came down in torrents, and we had the pleasure, or otherwise, of seeing the rain drip through our mud roof on to the floor in several places. To celebrate the new year we gave the children, their fathers, and some invited guests, an entertainment with the magic lantern. They

were quite amazed and pleased. I showed them ten Scripture subjects, the chromatrope, and one slide of a Bedouin Sheikh; this pleased them very much, and they all, about thirty, went away very grateful and happy. And this was mixed with instruction, too; for instance, when I put on the sheet 'David minding the sheep,' eight or nine boys will repeat the 23rd Psalm, and the elder people will listen and take it in, and so with other subjects.

"I am glad to say that I am getting on very well with the language; Mrs. Forder and I have an hour's reading in Arabic every day with Miss Arnold. It is very dry now, but we shall improve, as we learn the signs and letters.

"During December 454 patients were attended to here.

"We are all well. God bless you in your work at home! With kind regards from us both to Mrs. Piercy and the children, •

"Yours, very sincerely,

"ARCHIBALD FORDER."

"Sent away January 21st, 1892."

These letters will help the reader to understand that I was daily in touch with the Arabs in and around Kerak, and a kinder feeling towards us was soon manifest, especially from those who had been the most difficult to get on with during previous years. Six months had passed quickly and

pleasantly when the daily routine of our life was abruptly broken into by the sudden calling home of Mrs. Forder. Without any warning and without time even for a word of farewell, my wife fell dead in our room before me. The Arabs showed great kindness and sorrow, and next morning, having buried my wife in the Land of Moab, I set out for Jerusalem to send home the sad news, reaching Jerusalem three days later. The following letters were sent to our kind Secretary:—

“KERAK, MOAB,

“*May 7th, 1892.*

“MY DEAR FRIENDS, MR. AND MRS. PIERCY.

“It is now 10.30 p.m., but it seems more like ten and a half months than hours since noon to-day. God help us! for if ever we stood in need of Divine help, we do now.

“Exactly at noon the gentle spirit of Mrs. Forder went to its rest. I could not, I would not, believe it. Mr. F. said, should he go and fetch anyone. I said, ‘Yes, bring the Ma’alim.’ He went, and in a minute they came back together. Then came the two schoolmistresses, the other Ma’alim, and the Greek priest. They were all thunderstruck. Poor Mr. Forder completely broke down; and I got our friend the Ma’alim Khasus to take him away into our house. After a while we locked up the house and went over to the priest’s



The First Missionary Grave in Moab, East of the Jordan.

house against the Church. There I left Mr. F. and the Ma'alim, and I came to make all necessary arrangements, as we had determined the funeral should not be until the morning, and that she should have some kind of a coffin, the best we could make her. Salim Semiene (our landlord) and the Ma'alim Sana'a worked away, and made it from packing cases to the best of their ability, and I lined it with blue sateen. I tried to buy a piece of the garden attached to the Church, but it cannot be sold as it is Church property. So we are to have a piece in the middle of the Christian burial ground, and I will have it walled and roofed in.

"To-morrow morning, when the funeral is over, Mr. F. will leave for Jerusalem. I want him to go on to England, but he does not want to leave me here alone. God would give me strength, I am sure, and I am certain the best thing is for him to come home for a little. If Miss Bowyer can come here soon, I don't see any reason why Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby should hurry their return.

"And now, dear Mr. Piercy, Mr. Forder and I are going to ask you if you would mind going to dear Mrs. Forder's parents and Mr. Forder's, and breaking this terrible piece of news to them. Mr. F. cannot write it, but I expect he will write by the next post from Jerusalem. To-night he is sleeping over in the priest's house by the Church.

"I will leave room for Mr. F. to add to this in

Jerusalem if he can. I know we need not ask the loving prayers of all dear friends now.

“ With much love,

“ Believe me,

“ Yours affectionately,

“ MARY ARNOLD.”

“ JERUSALEM,

“ *May 11th*, 1892.

“ DEAR MR. PIERCY.

“ After three days and one night’s forced journey I arrived at seven this morning. Thanks to our Heavenly Father I had a safe and comfortable journey. I took sheikhs for guides through the different territories. On Sunday morning at eight o’clock we laid my dear wife in the grave ; all the heads of the Greek Christian families came and stood by ; six of the most influential carried the coffin to the grave from our house, and the Greek priest read their service over her remains. Everyone was so kind. I feel that at present I cannot leave Miss Arnold to all the work, and I must put my things in order after such an event. Although Kerak is no longer home to me I must not give up what God has called me to. I cannot think why God has visited me in this way. If He had only spared her to lie in her chair I would not have murmured, but she is better off now in her last beautiful home. She was such a patient, loving

trusting, wife, that it is a dreadful separation. God allowed me to be with her to the last, and, although there was no final 'good bye,' or kiss, yet I am comforted by the thought that we may and shall hereafter have a joyful meeting, never again to be separated. I hope to start back to Kerak on Monday morning next. If Miss Bowyer comes I must move somewhere else, just as God directs. Now all is dark and dreary, 'but my trust is in God.'

"I find all letters and papers safe to hand, for which accept my best thanks.

"I need not ask for special prayer at this time, also for guidance in the future. Kind regards to all dear friends.

"From your sorrowing friend in Christ,

"ARCHIBALD FORDER."

At the next meeting of the Kerak Council the following resolutions were passed:—

RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.

(1). The Council having heard of the death of Mrs. Forder, whilst deeply deploring the great loss the Mission has sustained, expresses its devout gratitude to God for the service she was enabled to render during her brief and honourable career.

(2). It expresses its earnest sympathy with Mr. Forder in his great bereavement, and prays that it may be sanctified to his being made more meet for the Master's use, and that meanwhile he may be abundantly sustained by divine consolation.

(3). The Council further expresses its grateful appreciation of the kindness of the native Christians and other inhabitants of Kerak, to Mr. Forder and Miss Arnold in the time of their grievous trial, and directs that its thanks be duly conveyed to them.

(4). It also instructs its Secretary to assure the late Mrs. Forder's family of their sincere and prayerful sympathy; at the same time reminding them that to her has fallen the honour of being the first Protestant Christian who has laid down her life for the salvation of Moab.

My stay in Jerusalem was a short one, and I was soon back in Kerak once more. As soon as the news was abroad that I had returned, some of the chiefs of the place came to me, and among other things they said to me were these: "Now you have buried your dead in our midst you have become a son of the land, one of ourselves, and you must not think of leaving us." From that time on we were better friends than ever, and the work went on well. Another letter sent home will tell of more experience, that in a measure helped to fill the loneliness of my life about that time.

"KERAK,

"*May 30th, 1892.*

"DEAR MR. PIERCY,

"In a few hours I am off to the Mujelli tents for two or three days to attend to some wounded men,

so I hasten to write you a few lines. In my last I told you I expected to leave Jerusalem on Saturday ; this I did, getting away with the medicines, timber, and chairs, also Miss Arnold's two trunks, which she needed sadly. The first night we slept out in the open, the evening of the second day we reached Medeba, rested there all Monday, and early on Tuesday morning started again, taking with us a Sheikh as guide and protector. This was a good thing, for three robbers fully armed appeared out of some old ruins, but seeing who was with us, fell back again to await the next comers. We reached the Mujelli tents at six p.m. on Tuesday, and I had a very kind reception from the Sheikhs. They all came and sat with me, killed a sheep, and made coffee, brought milk, eggs, bread, and sundry native dishes ; in a word, treated me in the kindest possible way. I slept in their tent, and in the morning came on to the city, accompanied by two Sheikhs fully armed, who brought me to our house in safety ; since then one of them has been cruelly murdered. The news had reached the city that I was returning, and everyone was waiting to welcome me ; our school-boys and my English class came running down the mountain side with 'Welcome ! Mr. Forder, God bless you,' &c. One friend had prepared me a meal, and wished me to go and eat with him. I was away just ten days.

"I am glad to say that I found Miss Arnold quite well ; no one had worried her unnecessarily during

my absence ; they only came near her with urgent cases for medicine. Our real friend, Muallim Khasus, the schoolmaster, has been such a help to us through all our trouble ; had he been my father he could not have been kinder to us, nothing was or is too much for him to do. Miss Arnold and I think it would be well to send him a Waterbury watch ; he would appreciate it very much, as coming not from us, but from friends in England.

“Now I must tell you how busy I have been since I returned, and what dreadful doings have taken place. Last Wednesday, the 25th, a fight took place between some Mujellis and the next tribe, the Skour ; two brothers, sons of Sheikh Khalil, were cruelly murdered, not killed in fair fighting, but captured and killed in a barbarous manner. These two were our best friends among the Mujellis, so that it is to us a really serious loss ; they were fine young men, and much respected by the Keraki. Besides these, two more, sons of Sheikhs, and two Keraki as well, were killed. On Thursday morning the sad news was brought, and at once men, women, and children joined in the wailing, strong men crying like children from real grief. Two hours later the bodies arrived loaded on three camels ; the sight was one I shall never forget, and the wailing of the women cannot be described. When the bodies were washed, I stood by and saw all the wounds ; it was a dreadful sight ; such butchery I never want to see again.

“During these proceedings and the funeral following, a request came that I should at once go out to the tents to see a wounded man, son of one of the Sheikhs, a cruel man. At first I refused, as a boy only was to go with me, and the country is in such a disturbed state, the Skour being bold enough to come into Kerak Territory; the Sheikh then said, ‘Wait until the morning and I will go with you myself.’ Next morning we started at six o’clock, taking plenty of medicines, &c., with us. After four hours’ ride we reached the tents, and I found the poor fellow dreadfully wounded; I sewed up spear and sword wounds, and made him comfortable. In the afternoon the head Sheikh, who had lost his two sons, came from the city, accompanied by all the other Sheikhs; they did all they possibly could to make me comfortable, killed a sheep for me, and kept me well supplied with coffee and milk. I slept with them that night, and the following day returned to the city to get more suitable medicines. This family of Mujelli’s, who have been so cruel to Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby, now swear eternal friendship, and I really think they would not hurt a hair of our heads. I am glad that I have been used of God for their good; continue to pray for them especially, that they may accept the Saviour. They sorrowed with us, and we are permitted to be with them in their time of trouble. It is to these I am going in an hour or two.

“We had made up our minds to have a quiet

Sunday. The boys had come and gone, and I was having a tune on the harmonium, previous to a short service, when two heads appeared over the gate. On inquiry, a request was made for me to go out and see a man badly wounded, lying in some tents about one and a half hours' ride away; he had been wounded in a recent fight, and had been brought on a camel as far as he could come. Feeling it to be a call of duty, I had to put desires aside, and, although very tired from the two previous days' work, I soon packed my saddle-bags and set off. I found the man in a dreadful state, the worst case I have had as yet. His arm was deeply cut above the elbow; I had to put five stitches in it, in his chin two, chest one, back two; with lint, and plaster, and bandages, after two hours' work I got him in a comfortable state. After eating some eggs and bread I started back again, reaching our house just after three p.m., quite tired out. I shall have to go out several times to this man before I can leave him to the care of his own people. If I could read and explain the Bible to the people I have plenty of opportunities to do so, but I am at present only the advertising agent of the Kerak Mission. In my spare time I read a little Arabic, and when possible read with the boys in the school; I get on very well with the talking, but don't seem to make much progress with the written language.

"I have been making myself useful in Mr. Lethaby's house during the last fortnight. I should

like to make as many improvements as I can during the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby, so that they may find things nice when they return. If Miss Bowyer is coming out to join us, please don't send anything in the way of presents for the Sheikhs; Miss Arnold and I think that some coffee and sugar would be most acceptable to them. We hope to hear soon that more workers have been found who have the love of these ignorant Arabs in their hearts. We felt very much these two young Sheikhs being cut off, as they were without any hope of the future world, and we could not but pity the father and others who know nothing at all about the true Comforter. But I hope to see the time when I can tell them the story of the cross, and that I shall see them accepting the Saviour. It is not impossible, when we remember what He has done in other countries, where savage kings have given in before the Gospel; surely we need not despair about these Arab chiefs and their families.

"Now I must conclude; thanks for the papers you have sent, which are eagerly scanned for the latest news. Any fresh printed matter about our mission will be acceptable to enclose in letters to friends.

"I am glad to report that we still live in peace and quietness in the city. The people are always inquiring when Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby will be back again,

“Kind regards to Mrs. Piercy and to the Friday night friends, also to the children and yourself.

“From yours very sincerely,

“A. FORDER.”

After the first fifteen months in Kerak the following report was sent home and circulated, showing that God's blessing was on our efforts although things had occurred that we could not understand :—

REPORT OF A YEAR'S WORK IN KERAK, 1892.

January, 1893.

“It is with much thankfulness that I endeavour to write how we have been sustained in our work during the year just gone. In looking back over the year, I can say in the fullest assurance that God Himself has been present with us, and although we have been called to pass through many troubles and even bereavement, yet we have experienced the fulfilment of the precious promise, ‘Lo, I am with you always.’ The past year has been one of progress, peace, and blessing; progress as regards the work, peace from the Mujellis and natives, and blessing and encouragement to the workers themselves. The year opened somewhat gloomily. Mr. Lethaby had been obliged to leave for England owing to bad health, the Mujellis or ruling chiefs were more or less against us, and we were entirely cut off from the outside civilized world by quarantine.



A Christian Couple of Moab.

come to our aid should we require them, as we have done in three instances during the year. Some of them are friendly to us from my doing little jobs for them, such as mending a saddle, repairing a wooden bowl or a bread box, mending a boot, &c., which things please and gratify them, and which costs me very little trouble. All I want them to know is that I am their friend. Miss Bowyer also made a good friend for us in a powerful old Sheikh by making him a pair of calico riding trousers, he finding the materials. We want, however, to do more than this for them; we desire to win them to Christ. Many times during the year they have listened most attentively to the reading of the Bible, and in each case voted it very good. We thank God for the many answers to prayer on our behalf, and I still ask for more earnest prayer on behalf of these Mujelli Chiefs and their families. They are now asking us for a schoolmaster who will live among them in their tents, and teach their children to read and write. They offer to provide food, tent, and protection if only we will supply the man; such a thing would be an accomplishment indeed. Please lay this matter before the Lord.

“During the past year I have visited the three villages within five hours’ ride of Kerak. In June I went to Kunzera, staying eight days; in September I visited Arrag; and in November I went to Kathrubbah, giving medicine and reading the good old Book. The latter and its contents were quite

unknown to the people in these places; in each village much attention was paid to the word. The people are nominally Moslems, but in other respects heathen. In Kunzera and Arrag I was called to the Sheikhs who had been wounded; on leaving I was pressed to return and live among them and open schools, and work. Here are three open doors, the ground broken up a little, hundreds of men, women, and children, each with a precious soul, all waiting for someone to come and instruct them. If we had the workers here we could take possession and commence work at once. 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into this part of His harvest.'

"Now I must say a little about the work in the city. Both in the school and in the medical department the work has gone on steadily; during the year twelve boys have been in constant attendance, learning to read and write, and daily having the Bible in their hands, and many of them can read and understand it. But for the instruction they get with us they would not know how to read or write one word of their own language. The fathers of the boys are beginning to see that the school benefits their children, and I hope this New Year will see an increase in their numbers. Nearly all the boys have their own Bibles, which they have bought with eggs, wood, fruit, or fowls; and in the evenings they read to their parents and friends, and in their own way explain the gospel and Old Testa-

ment stories. The lads under our care are quite different to ordinary Kerak boys ; their constant connection with us has a civilising effect, and what they read and learn from the Bible bears fruit. The Keraki generally indulge in cursing, stealing, taking God's name in vain, and in fact everything bad ; for one of our boys to do such a thing would be considered a sin ; and they are not backward in telling the grown-up people so. We have every reason to believe that the boys in their simple way engage in prayer morning and evening. One or two instances I must relate for the encouragement of our friends. In January the man who accompanied Mr. Lethaby to Jerusalem, returned to Kerak after an absence of seven weeks, entering the city in the night. He lived in a house adjoining that of one of our scholars who, hearing that he had come, and that Mr. L. was safe and well in Jerusalem, at daybreak went off to the house of another one of our boys and told him the news. They thought this a matter for thankfulness, and accordingly knelt down in a corner, and not knowing what to say they repeated the Lord's prayer in Arabic and then in English ; a strange thanksgiving, but God who knew their hearts no doubt accepted the thanks coming from the lips of these two little Bedoui Arabs of eight or nine years. On another occasion the lads had assembled for morning school, and were told by Mrs. Lethaby or Miss Arnold that Mrs. Forder had passed a very bad night and suffered much pain,

and was then in great pain. After a few minutes the boys were missing, and on returning were asked where they had been; the reluctant answer was, 'Into a quiet place to pray God for Mrs. Forder and take away her pains and make her well.' Those simple petitions were answered, for that day pain was alleviated to some extent. Our great hope of these lads is that they will accept Christ as their Saviour, and in after years be used for good among their own people. To hear these boys sing in Arabic, 'Jesus loves me,' 'Hark the herald angels,' 'Tell me the old, old story,' and others, would do any one's heart good, and we trust they will form the beginning of a church in Kerak. As regards the girls, since the departure of Mrs. Lethaby nothing much has been attempted, as time and opportunity have failed; often on Sunday mornings four or five of them will come and with the boys repeat the Commandments and any text they know. We hope, however, during the coming year that Miss Bowyer, or Mrs. Lethaby on her return, will be able to make a good move in this direction; in this country it is most desirable that females should deal with their own sex. A suitable place for the girls to gather in is at present a drawback to getting them together; this, however, we expect to remedy during the coming year.

"Now I will pass on to the medical work, which is indeed a very important branch, and one which requires much patience, wisdom, and tact. During

the past year 5,920 patients have received medicine from us, and 88 teeth were extracted. Many of the cases were serious ones, but we have by God's help been able to do very much good and relieve many aches and pains; wounds form a large number of the cases. Just now we have two very bad cases in hand, one being the son of our ruling Sheikh; he has a nasty curved gash, four or five inches long, on his head, and is away in the tents three hours' north of Kerak. I have spent nine days and nights with him and hope after three or four more visits to leave him quite well. He was wounded in a fight with a neighbouring tribe. The other case is that of a man who was shot in the foot accidentally; his foot is much shattered and the big toe only hangs by the skin. We do our very best for him every day, but we dread two things, viz., lockjaw and mortification, but we pray God to deliver him from these; it must be six or eight weeks before he can get about. A few months ago I had a young man who had been speared in the arm, cutting it to the bone longways. I was called to the tents to see him on a Sunday; I put in five stitches, went out to him twenty or twenty-five times, and had the pleasure of seeing him regain the use of his arm. A few weeks ago a young man about twenty was wounded in the eye by his gun exploding; although the sight was quite lost, yet we were able to heal the wound, and save him from any disfigurement. Fever, dysentery, toothache, rheumatism, coughs, &c., are everyday

cases, and if left to us the patients generally pull through. In some instances, if one dose does not produce the desired effect, the people through ignorance go away to the native doctor to be burnt, or bled, or treated in some other way, which oftentimes ends in death, and for which they must pay very heavily in hard money. It will take many years for these Arabs to believe in much outside their own remedies and customs, but they are beginning to see that our way is the best. The prevailing idea is that we get so much money for every case from the Queen or our Consul in Jerusalem.

“At the commencement of August I began to read a portion of Scripture to the people assembled for medicine. I thought such a good opportunity every day ought not to be missed. Sometimes I had thirty listeners, mostly Moslems, quite unable to read a word for themselves, and ignorant of the contents of the Book of God. Much attention was paid, many questions asked and answered; several came day after day only to listen; oftentimes one chapter or portion was not enough, and more would be asked for. One morning I purposely commenced giving the medicine without any reading, when I heard remarks about, ‘No reading to-day,’ and then one man said, ‘You have not read to us to-day.’ I said, ‘Do you want the reading?’ The general answer was, ‘Of course we want it; no one else but you reads and tells us such good things.’ Then for several Sundays I had gather-

ings of men to read and talk with them. Ten, fifteen, twenty, came together and listened and talked on Bible subjects. When the ploughing season arrived these Sunday gatherings broke up, as the men and their families were away in the tents busy with their ploughing and sowing. I hope to resume this again shortly. We have reason to believe that men are beginning to think about what they hear. I was called to a sick man a short time ago, and after giving him medicine asked the people in the house if we should read to them from God's Book ; they assented, and my boy read to them. After I had spoken a few words one man said, 'Oh, khowagah (sir), I heard you read one day that we must not curse or take God's name in vain, and I have not forgotten it ; and now I try not to do so, because you said it was very bad ; your book is very good.' Others have led us to think that they remember and think over what they hear at these morning readings. If we are called to a case we take the medicine in one hand and the Bible in the other, and the people are always ready to listen to us. Please pray that God's convicting power may come down among these people, and that many may be turned from sin to salvation in Jesus Christ.

"Another item of our work here is the sale of Bibles, Testaments, and Gospels in Arabic. During the year past many copies of these have been sold or given to those who can read ; unless we are here,

there is no one to supply the people with such books. I had a man come to me from two days' journey south, who had been shot in the shoulder; he was very attentive to the morning reading, and after a few days I found that he could read. When he went away I gave him a copy of St. John's Gospel; some two months after he turned up again and asked me to give him a Bible. He had read the other book to the people among whom he lived, and they were very much interested; now he wanted to read more to them. On his leaving the city I gave him a Bible, and my prayers followed that man, and that book.

"I must now close this brief report. We hope during the coming year to see more being done for these Arabs, something for the women and girls, a class for young Moslem men, and a regular meeting on Sundays for any who like to come. These are things that are in our minds at present, and we trust by God's help to accomplish some of them. The way is open, we have no opposition in the shape of the Turks, but what we want are suitable buildings, more workers, a Christian native school-master. I feel constrained to exclaim with Charles Wesley, 'Oh for a trumpet voice!' so that I might lay the needs of this place before the Christian world.

"Many interesting accounts could be written in connection with our every day life and work here, but some of them appear in the quarterly papers

published. About trials, drawbacks, and discouragements I must not speak; of course we have such things here, and Satan is always busy, but our blessings and mercies far outnumber the other things. Our table is always bountifully spread, the houses we inhabit are somewhat more comfortable, the natives on every hand are friendly disposed towards us, no one makes us afraid either in our going out or coming in. Surely we have every encouragement to go forth joyfully and willingly to the work of another year, looking up to and trusting in Him for Whom we are working, knowing that as long as we trust Him we need not fear anything.

“A. FORDER.”

During the year 1892 another worker was added to the Mission, and the letter sent home by her tells of a better state of affairs than was experienced by us only a few months before:—

FROM MISS BOWYER.

“Crossing the deep gorge through which the Arnon flows, Miss B. says, “I walked down Mojib and rode up, and one experience of that will suffice for a life-time. By dint of patience we reached the top on the other side, and, through God’s protecting care, in safety. Then our way lay over miles of plain country. Towards the close of the afternoon we drew near the region of the Mujellis, and were presently met by a young Sheikh, to whom Mr. Forder had been able to show kindness, and render efficient surgical help.

"After courteously greeting Miss Arnold and myself, he wished us to go to his tent, and himself escorted us. Arrived there we were treated as distinguished guests; coffee was promptly made, and a lamb or kid killed in our honour. Either father or son kept to us constantly, and we were not allowed to be objects of curiosity to all the children in the camp. At supper, choice morsels were brought to us, after which we lay down and slept till dawn.

"We were now only three hours distance from Kerak, and the same young Sheikh escorted us all the way. So it came to pass that I entered Kerak peaceably and quietly, and without the loss of a pin's-worth. I considered it a matter for great thankfulness; and presently the boys came flocking round, wishing me "good morning" in English.

"Presents had been coming in in honour of the *Sitt jadeed* (new lady); among them thirty eggs, a couple of fowls, some beautiful tomatoes, besides grapes and cucumbers; so you will see the people bear some good will, and also what Kerak can produce.

"*July 18th.* To-day some Sheikhs having come into the city, we have had a further present of lamb, brought for me very kindly by the teacher. Of course we shall not always fare so well, and then must fall back on our stores; but I have no fear of starving."

Early in 1893 I paid a hurried visit home for change of scene and thought, also to confer with the

Council about putting up better buildings for our work. The result was that money was given and better and more convenient rooms were built in a healthier part of the town.

These were a great benefit to us and the work. Some of these buildings have since been replaced by better ones, and are still held by the C.M.S. in Kerak.

My sister returned with me to my mountain home in Moab, and we had some interesting and novel experiences, as recorded in letters sent home from Kerak.

EXTRACT FROM MR. FORDER'S LETTER.

“KERAK,

“*June 16th, 1893.*

“DEAR MR. PIERCY,

“It is with much pleasure that I once again begin a letter to you. You will know that my sister and I left Jerusalem on Tuesday, May 30th. We accomplished half our journey to Kerak all right; but on reaching Miecā (which is an hour and half from Medeba) I heard that a big intertribal fight had taken place the day before, in which several powerful Sheikhs had been killed and wounded, and that the defeated tribes had settled down on the main road to Kerak, waiting to rob and to kill all passers-by, so people were afraid to move far away from home. The gathering in of the harvest was almost stopped; not a man could be

found willing to take us on to Kerak; no offers could induce any one to go. We settled down in a cave and made ourselves as comfortable as we could, hourly praying to God to open our way for us. After seven days' weary waiting two men came forward and said they would go, if I would go one day out of the usual way, farther west. I settled with them for animals for our baggage and medicine, and we started, taking many of the cases with us, but leaving some to follow. After three days of dodging about, and staying here and there, at last we reached Kerak, thirteen days after leaving Jerusalem. I was very heartily received by the natives, and was very thankful once again to be at home. My sister stood the journey well, but, like myself, was glad when it was over.

“ We did not, however, get into the city without a brush. My man having gone on before to announce our coming, just outside the walls I was attacked by some strange man, who took away part of my headgear, but not until he had left four cuts from his dagger on my hand and arm, and grazed my throat and chest. I thought he would have killed me. This treatment of me roused the natives, and some men followed the man, and found out his name, etc.; the Mujellis especially were angry, and to-day I learn that one of them has found the man, and regained my belongings. . . . The Greek Schoolmaster was exceedingly pleased with his watch, and wishes me to render you very many

thanks for it . . . As yet the Turkish soldiers are not in Kerak; there is a great deal of talk about them just now, some saying that they have left Damascus *en route* for Kerak. The country now is in a dreadful state, murders and robberies seem to be more than ever on the increase. Turkish soldiers might make some impression on the people, and perhaps check crime a little; now there is no punishment for wrong-doing, which of course only encourages such proceedings . . . I hope in my next to give some news about the new buildings. My kind regards to Mrs. Piercy, and accept the same yourself, with many thanks for your kindness to me.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ A. FORDER.

CROSSING THE JORDAN.

BY MISS FORDER.

“ We left Jerusalem about seven a.m. with three camels, three or four donkeys, and two men, and kept on until eleven, when we reached a khan and remained there for about half-an-hour. Then we went on through mountains until nearly three p.m., when we reached Jericho. The hotel was shut up, as the season was over, so we had to sit outside in a kind of farm-yard with men, women, and children all around, and animals as well. After a rest we made a start for the Jordan; this time we had a plain to cross. It was very hot, as we were so low,

level with the Dead Sea. At six p.m. we were on the banks of the river; it was so different to what I expected. Instead of green hills and fields it is all sand, quite like the sea shore, and on both sides very many people and animals were waiting to cross. There is only one barge, and this has to be pulled to and fro by means of ropes. We managed to get over about seven, our boxes, camels, and some men in one load. I felt very tired after so much riding, and after making some tea we tried to sleep, but it was almost impossible owing to the noise and the animals nearly walking over us. Among the animals were hundreds of goats, and from these one of our men obtained a supply of milk which we thoroughly enjoyed. It was full moon, so we could see quite well, and it looked so strange to see such a lot of men and animals lying in the open air, and the big blazing fires to keep off any wild animals. About two o'clock the men told us they wanted to go on, and we were not sorry, because then we should finish the Jordan plain before the heat of the day. By six o'clock we were at the foot of the mountains beyond, and by the waters of Heshbon I got my sponge and soap and knelt on a stone and washed in the river, which was very refreshing. Here we had a meal, and by eight o'clock were on our journey again. We went on up, up, up, until I thought we should never have finished. Men at the Jordan told our men not to go to Medeba as it was not safe, so we kept on till

about eleven o'clock, when we came to some Bedouin tents and there put up, for we were tired of riding from two o'clock. We went into their tents and laid down, but I could not bear it, the men and women made such a noise with their talk, and it was so fearfully hot; and worse than that, the women and children came crowding round us, and they were so fearfully dirty. You cannot imagine people living in such a state. After a while we found a little shed place at the end of the tents, which was much better than being in the midst of the people.

“ We stayed here all the next day. At sunset the women began to make bread and prepare supper; then the flocks and goats came wandering over the hills, and they all had to be milked; some did one thing and some another. They gave us plenty of milk, which was delicious. When the men came riding up on their horses fires were soon made, and all were sitting around the pot eating. Again the animals kept us from sleeping, and at two o'clock the men said they were ready to go, so up we had to get, and off once more, this time for Mien instead of Medeba, which we reached about eight in the morning.

“ We went to the Schoolmaster's house, such as it was, and as soon as we got inside, men, women, and children came flocking in to look at us; there they sat on the floor, which was of earth, and smoked. Then our host brought us bread, and we had a tin

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of jam with us, so we had our breakfast, and by this time I had taken a survey of the house. It was a fair-sized vault, underground, and frequently we had showers of dust from the roof. The room was very dark as the door was small and low down. The only furniture was two large heaps of stone covered with mud plaster, one on either side; these were their beds—of course no blankets, sheets, or pillows. The family—father, mother, and two boys, one about twelve years old and the other about two—slept on one, and Arch on the other. Arch made me a little room for myself in one corner by standing our boxes one on the other; some boxes made a bed, so I was better off than the others. A coffee-pot was about the only civilized thing they possessed, besides two or three tin pans, which were used for everything—for us to wash in and to eat from. They simply poured a little water over their hands and let it go on the ground when *they* washed. They gave us plenty of their native bread, and some honey; it all came in these tin pans, and we had to sit one on each side of our boxes, the pan in the middle on the box, and dip our bread in, and this had to continue for a week, because we could get no men to take us on to Kerak.

“You can imagine the days seemed very long, as we had nothing whatever to do. We could not go outside all day because of the heat. At last we got a man to promise to take us on, but Arch had to pay him good money before he would face the

dangers of the road ; then when we thought to start, and had all our things ready for loading, the man sat in his house doing nothing, and said it was not convenient then—he would go in the morning. Of course, we could only wait, and finally got away about eight o'clock. We started for the Hameideh tents to get a guide to take us on ; these we reached about 5 p.m., very tired of riding, but could not get free of the women and children for some time. Directly you are in the tents they swarm round you, and some would feel my dress and boots, and some my face, I suppose to see if I was flesh and blood like themselves. We had some nice milk when the goats came home, and a goat was killed, but I could not touch it. I had tried it once before, and that was enough ; but here I have enjoyed it, because it is handled and cooked in a clean and proper fashion. Again the goats, horses, donkeys, camels, cows, sheep, dogs, &c., prevented our getting much sleep, and just as we did get off, which was about three o'clock, the men wanted to go on, so we got up and once more made a start. Mojib was before us, so we had to “make our hearts strong” (a native expression).

“It is impossible to describe what this place is like so that you could fully understand. It is like climbing enormous rocks ; there is stone enough to build cities. I thought we had come to the top two hours before we did ; we stopped about two hours by a little mountain stream, and sat under oleander

trees, which were so lovely after the hot sun and glaring earth. I walked down a good way ; it was more than I could do to ride a horse down such a fearful place. Going along one very narrow mountain path, one donkey slipped, or rather the earth gave way under it, and the poor animal, loaded with my tin box, another box, and my fiddle, went sliding down about twenty or thirty feet. I stood and trembled for my fiddle, but it was an earth hill, about the only one passed, and only a little damage was done. We reached the top about seven, and had to be stared at again, and then, after a good drink of milk and a rest for four hours, we made our last start for Kerak, and this time had level ground to go on.

“ It was just eleven when we set out. It was not nice riding in the dark, but we had rest and comfort in view, so did not mind ; we came to the Mujelli tents about three in the morning and passed them safely, and had a first view of Kerak about six ; it looked so nice from the hill, but we had to go down and up before reaching it. We went down very well and were about half way up when we met a young fellow who took a fancy to Arch's *morea* (the rope round his head). It was a new one he had bought in Jerusalem. The man wanted A. to take his old one, and give him the new one ; of course, A. remonstrated, but the man was so determined and pulled out his dagger and placed it at A.'s chest ; I was terribly frightened and A. let him have it to quiet me.

“One of our men had gone on to tell Mrs. Lethaby that we were near, so before long the school children were scrambling over the rocks to meet us; Miss Arnold next appeared, and Mrs. Lethaby met us just outside her house. The people soon brought us presents; we had thirty-three eggs, two live fowls, a big bowl of butter which is like lard, two bowls of honey in the comb, fish from the river, and several other things, while the landlord killed a goat for us, so we had plenty.

“Kerak,

“*June 18th, 1893.*”

In November of 1893, much to the regret of all, the Turkish Government, after many attempts, established a garrison in Kerak and set up a strong government. The first action they took was with our Mission. The school was closed and all medical work put a stop to. These circumstances, along with others, caused our Committee to give the Mission into the hands of the Church Missionary Society Acting on advice from our Council and others, I stayed on for the new Society. Then followed two years of stern opposition from the Turks. A prominent and valuable man in the eyes of the Sultan was removed and degraded, because of the treatment he subjected us to.

During 1894 I went over to the Holy City, where I met my present wife, who was well suited to be my partner in this work among the Arabs. Some

years of experience of the life and language of the people had fitted her for the life in Kerak, and her desire to extend the knowledge of Christ amongst the natives made us one in purpose. Much of what is recorded in these pages is due to her readiness to remain at home and set me free to go away into the regions unknown, so that some at least may hear the news of Salvation. Let not a one-sided thanksgiving be any result of the reading of this volume, but let all remember that "as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

During these months of being unable to work among the people the buildings were pushed along, with the result that by the time a medical man was sent to Kerak there was good accommodation for a medical mission. The wood work and much of the stone work had to be done by myself, meaning lots of hard work. As the opposition from the Government was relaxed, another question regarding myself came up, viz., that of sectarianism. I was not a fully fledged churchman, and was being employed by a Church Society. Would I conform to the requirements of the Church of England? Not being led to do so conscientiously it was decided that I must be disconnected with the work I had helped to build up in the Land of Moab, so with many regrets at having to leave my Kerak friends and the work I had given my life to, we, my wife and little boy, along with that valuable worker, Miss Arnold, turned

our back on Kerak, and set out to face the world, not however alone, for we had God and the promises to rely on. Miss Arnold returned to her parents in Western Australia. Thus was lost to the missionary cause in a difficult field, a well-trying, experienced, acclimatized, all-round good worker, and all because she did not belong to the Established Church of England. On leaving the Society the following was given me by the C.M.S. Secretary of the Palestine Mission :—

“ Mr. Archibald Forder has been engaged in mission work at Kerak on the East of the Jordan for five and a half years, three of which have been spent in connection with the Church Missionary Society. Mr. Forder is a very earnest Christian and a most energetic worker, and the present promising position of the mission work at Kerak is due largely to his zeal and enterprize under God.

“ During the first two or three years that Mr. Forder was at Kerak the work was specially difficult and full of danger on account of the wild and uncivilized state of the people. They were at that time beyond the control of even the Turkish Government, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. The greatest credit is due to Mr. Forder for the tact with which he dealt with the people, which was used by God to the opening of doors for the proclamation of the Gospel in very many ways. We are all very sorry to lose Mr. Forder from our

mission band, but we trust and pray that the Lord will speedily thrust him forth into other work for Him, and own and bless him even more than whilst he was at Kerak. Wherever he may take up work the C.M.S. Palestine Mission will always regard him as one of their number.

“J. R. LONGLEY HALL.

“Jerusalem,

“*February 17th, 1897.*”

CHAPTER III

From Moab to the Entrance into Arabia

THE reader has been told the reason of my having to leave Kerak, and step out and seek new supporters and a new field of labour.

Many have asked me why I did not stay and carry on work in the land, and among the people where I had gained such an entrance and so much favour among the wild, ignorant Arabs. I was sorely tempted to do so, but many things were against my doing so. The Government would have severely punished any native that had rented me a house or room, and the buildings I had erected were in the hands of the Society that, solely on sectarian grounds, had been obliged to disconnect me and mine. Again, it would have been unwise to have started an opposition mission in the same place, yet not connected with my former employees. This would have caused perplexing and unpleasant questionings among the natives, and I would not have their ideas of Protestantism warped by the

many and foolish questions that exist among the so-called followers of Christ, so in January, 1897, I said good-bye to my many friends and mountain home in Kerak, and set out to commence another era in this journey called Life. I did not regret the step I had taken five years before when, in obedience to the Heavenly call, I left business, home, and friends, to follow my Master to Moab. I went to Jerusalem and spent a few weeks in the company of my wife and three little ones, twins having come into our home quite recently. There I came in touch with the agents of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New York, an organization led by Rev. A. B. Simpson, and having for one of its objects the speedy evangelization of the world. I was told that they were wanting a man to carry the news of salvation to Arabia's desert rangers and the descendants of Ishmael. A sum of money had been given for that work, but the man was wanted to take it up. After prayer and consideration, I wrote to New York, and correspondence resulted in an invitation to visit the States and put the needs and claims of the Arabs and Arabia before the Alliance people, this resulting in thousands of men and women being interested and led to pray for and support a movement into Arabia, one of the hardest and fastest-closed lands to the Christian and to the Gospel; but being assured of ultimate success I joyfully returned to the East to take up this pioneer movement into the "Cradle of Islam."

I attribute the success of the past year's work to the unceasing fervent prayers of many of God's own people, who without any news of me for long periods, never failed to uphold me and mine at the mercy-seat of prayer.

Scores of God's own people in America and England, rich in faith but poor in money, gave me small sums with which to get Arabic Scriptures to dispose of as I saw best among the needy neglected tribes of Arabs wherever I should go. These gifts enabled me to buy from the American Press, at Beirut, the undermentioned Scriptures in the Arabic language. To make them more acceptable I had them bound in the colours and style of the Koran, the Arab's sacred book.

Bibles, 776. Testaments, 212.

Genesis and John }
Psalms and Luke } bound together, 2,400.

Gospels, separate, 150. Salvation leaflets, 4,000.

The latter containing the Ten Commandments, prayers for cleansing from sin, and texts on salvation have proved most useful and acceptable, especially amongst Moslems. The greater part of these books have been carefully distributed, many of them sold, as experience has taught me that the Arab cares for a thing he has purchased more than if it cost him nothing. Surely here is cause for thanksgiving and prayer, that such a number of Scriptures have been placed in the hands and homes of those, many of

وَلَسْتَ تَعْلَمُ هَذَا. ١١ الْحَقُّ الْحَقُّ أَقُولُ لَكَ إِنَّنَا إِنَّمَا
 نَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا نَعْلَمُ وَنَشْهَدُ بِمَا رَأَيْنَا وَلَسْنُمُ تَقْبَلُونَ شَهَادَتَنَا.
 ١٢ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضِيَّاتِ وَلَسْنُمُ تُؤْمِنُونَ فَكَيْفَ
 تُؤْمِنُونَ إِنْ قُلْتُ لَكُمْ السَّمَوِّيَّاتِ. ١٣ وَلَيْسَ أَحَدٌ صَعَدَ
 إِلَى السَّمَاءِ إِلَّا الَّذِي نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ابْنُ الْإِنْسَانِ
 الَّذِي هُوَ فِي السَّمَاءِ

١٤ وَكَمَا رَفَعَ مُوسَى الْحَيَّةَ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ هَكَذَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ
 يُرْفَعَ ابْنُ الْإِنْسَانِ ١٥ لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ بَلْ
 تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَبَدِيَّةُ. ١٦ لِأَنَّهُ هَكَذَا أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ الْعَالَمَ
 حَتَّى بَذَلَ ابْنَهُ الْوَحِيدَ لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ بَلْ
 تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَبَدِيَّةُ. ١٧ لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يُرْسِلِ اللَّهُ ابْنَهُ إِلَى
 الْعَالَمِ لِيَدِينَ الْعَالَمَ بَلْ لِيُخَلِّصَ بِهِ الْعَالَمَ. ١٨ الَّذِي
 يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ لَا يَدَانَ وَالَّذِي لَا يُؤْمِنُ قَدْ دِينَ لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ
 بِاسْمِ ابْنِ اللَّهِ الْوَحِيدِ. ١٩ وَهَذِهِ هِيَ الدِّينُونَةُ إِنَّ النُّورَ
 قَدْ جَاءَ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ وَأَحَبَّ النَّاسُ الظُّلْمَةَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ

whom never would have had the Word in their possession but for the willing gifts of earnest individuals.

A short account of the land to which I had been led now to turn my face will better help the reader to enter into all that is recorded in other parts of this book. The following is the substance of a booklet written and issued by Mr. Forder to create interest in

“ARABIA, ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR NEED.”

“During a long succession of ages, extending from the earliest period of recorded history down to the seventh century of the Christian era, the great peninsula formed by the Red Sea, the Euphrates, the Gulf of Persia, and the Indian Ocean, and known by the name of Arabia, remained unchanged and almost unaffected by the events which convulsed the rest of Asia. While kingdoms and empires rose and fell, and their inhabitants exterminated or carried into captivity, Arabia preserved in the depths of its deserts its primitive character and independence, nor have its nomadic tribes ever bent their necks to servitude. The peninsula is about fifteen hundred miles from north to south, and twelve hundred from east to west. It is described in three divisions, the name of each being indicative of the face of the soil and its general character, Arabia Deserta (the Desert) is a wide waste of sand, with here and there villages and towns interspersed;

this was the country of the Ishmærites, and is still inhabited. Arabia Felix (the Happy) is an exceedingly fruitful land. The inhabitants, who claim their descent from Shem, are unlike the nomads who occupy the other districts. They have permanent abodes and support themselves by agriculture. Arabia Petrea (the Rocky) comprehends what was formerly the land of Midian. It is a land of shepherds and the scene of some of the most interesting events in the history of man. Horeb and Sinai are within its bounds. It has been said that if any people in the world afford in their history an instance of high antiquity and great simplicity of manners, the Arabs surely do. Coming among them one can hardly help fancying himself carried back to the days of Abraham. Of all nations the Arabs have preserved their language, manners, and peculiar customs more perfectly than any other. The population of the peninsula is ascribed, by some authorities, to Kahtan or Joctan, a descendant in the fourth generation from Shem. Yarab, one of his sons, founded the kingdom of Yemen (Arabia Felix), where the territory of Arabia was called after him. Jurham, another son, founded the kingdom of Hedjaz. Among these people Hagar and her son, Ishmael, were kindly received, when exiled from home by the patriarch Abraham.

“ In the process of time Ishmael married into the family of Jurham, and thus a stranger and a Hebrew became grafted on the original Arabian stock.

Ishmael's wife bore him twelve sons, who acquired dominion over the country, and whose prolific race divided into twelve tribes. Thus was fulfilled the covenant of God with Abraham, as recorded in Genesis xvii., xviii., xx.—‘And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.’

“These twelve princes with their tribes are further spoken of in Genesis xxv. 18, as occupying the country ‘from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria,’ a region identified by geographers with part of Arabia. Nebaioth and Kedar, the two first-born of Ishmael, are most noted among the princes for their wealth in flocks and herds, hence the expression ‘Rams of Nebaioth’ (Isaiah lx. 7), and about Kedar and his flocks, tents and camels in Jeremiah xlix. 28-32. Both appear to have been the progenitors of the wandering or pastoral Arabs. ‘The wealthy nation,’ says the prophet Jeremiah, ‘that dwelleth without care; which have neither gates nor bars; which dwell alone.’

“Ezekiel, in his lamentations for Tyre, exclaims, ‘Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats.’ And Isaiah, speaking to Jerusalem, says, ‘The multitude

of camels shall cover thee All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee' (Isaiah lx. 6, 7).

"It is among the rovers of the desert, the 'dwellers in tents,' by far the most numerous of the Arabs, that the national character is preserved in its primitive simplicity. These nomadic Arabs, as well as the dwellers in the cities, are sub-divided into innumerable petty tribes and families, each with its Sheikh.

"Arabia Deserta is under the rule of an independent Emir or Prince, who has no connection with the Turkish Government, and whose resident city is Hayal. The Turkish rule predominates in Arabia Felix (Yemen) and Arabia Petrea. It is estimated that about thirteen millions of Arabs are resident in these three districts.

"In early days the religion of the Arabs partook largely of two faiths, the Sabean and the Magian. The Sabean, however, was the one to which they most adhered. They pretended to derive it from Sabi the son of Seth, who with his father and his brother Enoch, they suppose to be buried in the pyramids. Others derive the name from the Hebrew word, Saba, or the Stars, and trace the origin of the faith to Assyrian Shepherds, who as they watched their flocks by night on the plains, noted the aspects and movements of the heavenly bodies and formed theories of their good and evil influences on human

affairs. The Sabeian faith was originally pure and spiritual, inculcating a belief in the unity of God, the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment, and the necessity of a virtuous and holy life to obtaining a happy immortality. By degrees this religion lost its original purity and simplicity, became obscured by mysteries, and degraded by idolatries.

“The rival sect of Magians (fire worshippers) took its rise in Persia. This creed, like the other, was simple and spiritual, inculcating a belief in one God, that He produced two active principles, viz., the angel of light or good, and the angel of darkness or evil. The rites of this religion were extremely simple, no temples, altars, or religious symbols, their prayers and hymns being addressed directly to the Deity, in what they conceived to be His residence, the Sun. In time this sect, like the other, lost sight of the Divine principle in the symbol, and came to worship fire as the real Deity. Judaism had made its way into Arabia at an early period, but very vaguely and imperfectly. Still, many of its rites and ceremonies became implanted in the country. At a later day, when Palestine was ravaged by the Romans, many Jews took refuge among the Arabs. The Christian religion has likewise had its adherents among the Arabs. St. Paul himself declares in his epistle to the Galatians that he ‘went into Arabia.’ The dissensions which arose in the early part of the third century in the Eastern

Church, breaking it up into sects, drove many into exile into remote parts of the East, filled the deserts of Arabia with anchorites, and planted the Christian faith among some of the principal tribes.

“The foregoing may give an idea of the causes which maintained the Arabs for so long in an unchanged condition. While the isolated position and vast deserts protected them from conquest, their internal feuds has kept them from being formidable as conquerors.

“The time at length arrived when these discordant tribes were to be united in one creed, and animated by one common cause ; when a mighty genius was to arise, who should bring together these scattered limbs, animate them with his own enthusiastic spirit, and lead them forth, a giant of the desert, to shake and overturn the empires of the earth.

“Mohammed, the founder of the faith of Islam, the religion of the Arabs, was born in Mecca, in April, in the year A.D., 569. His birth, according to tradition, was accompanied by signs and wonders. At the moment of his coming into the world a celestial light illuminated the country and the new-born babe, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, ‘God is Great! There is no God but God, and I am his prophet.’ Many are the stories told by revelations and wonderful appearances to him of the angel Gabriel. At an early age he came in contact with some monks who spoke much against the

idolatry of the times. Mohammed was impressed, and, being of a thoughtful turn of mind, came to the conclusion that it was wrong, and that the God of the monks was the only one to whom worship was due. Eventually he commenced preaching against the idolatries practised at Mecca, was persecuted, and at last driven away and took refuge in Medina, where he died. To-day his followers number about two hundred millions, their simple creed being 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His prophet.'

"Great honour and respect is paid to all the prophets, and next to their prophet no one is more revered than Jesus, but not as divine, only as a great wonder-worker and a good man. His death and resurrection are denied, but His coming again, and that soon, is firmly believed in by all Mohammedans.

"Hence this people with all their antiquity, primitive manners and customs, and generations of religion, are to-day in utter ignorance of a Saviour from sin. That they will be punished for sin they believe, but they console themselves by saying 'God is merciful' and Mohammed is His prophet.

In February, of 1898, I was in the Holy Land once more. My first duty was to make a home for my family, as it was impossible for them to accompany me on my proposed journey. This done, I went to Damascus to try and arrange for a start into Arabia. I found Arabs from Nejd, Central

Arabia, and after some amount of talking, I agreed with them for a certain amount to take me as far as the capital, Hayil, and bring me back again. They refused to set out from Jerusalem, not knowing the way so well from that point. Returning home, I put together my things, and settled to go to Damascus and join my men. All went well until the third day out, when about noon I was kicked by a horse, and my left leg broken. I was carried back to Nablous, and eventually to Jerusalem. but the fractured limb, through being badly set, kept me prisoner a long time; finally undergoing an operation and having some of the bone removed from my leg, it began to get strong and useful again. Our Board then thought it advisable that I should have a companion to accompany me on these journeys. Two volunteered, but after waiting for them some time, they eventually backed out for reasons only known to themselves. The next year I set out again, this time going south, hoping that from Maan, a place about 200 miles S.E. of Jerusalem, I could get Arabs to go with me into the so far closed land. I had reached some Arabs about a hundred miles away from home, and had been with them two days, and was to set out again in the morning, when all my plans were again put a stop to, and I was arrested and taken prisoner. I was sitting in the guest-tent talking with the Arabs, when suddenly six Turkish soldiers, in charge of an officer, rode up and asked for the traveller that was

staying with them. Being in Arab costume they did not recognize me, so I got up and went to the officer and asked him what he wanted with me. He told me he had been sent to arrest me and take me to the Governor of the nearest place, about six hours ride away. A horse was brought, and in the midst of these armed soldiers I was taken away. The official spoke rudely to me, and dared to call me a "dog," for which I gave him the length of my tongue, and told him such things that made him knuckle down and behave more civilly toward me. About ten o'clock we put down and slept. In the morning we started again, and about nine o'clock I was deposited in the Government House. Finding they had not a great catch in me, the officials let me go, but said I must return to my home under escort. I stayed a week in that place, and disposed of nearly all my Scriptures among the people. Then in the keeping of three soldiers I was sent to Jerusalem, and so the second attempt to enter Arabia seemed to end in failure. But our disappointment was His Appointment, and was all for a wise purpose. The next spring I set out again, this time in company with a traveller that, for geographical purposes, was visiting Edom and Māān.

In due time we reached the latter town, inhabited by an intelligent, unusually clean and industrious lot of Arabs. I had met many of them before in Kerak, so was no stranger among them. The traveller, having finished his survey, left for the

North, and I stayed behind. My few belongings and Scriptures were put in an empty house where I took up my abode, with a sack for a bed, and my cloak for a covering. For three days all went well, and many Scriptures found their way into the hands of the people. In exchange for them they gave me eggs, bread or fruit, so I was supplied in this respect. From a spring near by I got water. The evening of the third day a soldier appeared with an order for me to go at once to the local Governor. He was one of those who had taken a leading part in the massacre of the Armenians some time before, and by the Turkish Government, had been rewarded by the post of Governor at Māān. I went to him and he began to bully me, and ordered me to leave the place at once within an hour. I told him I was within my rights in being there, and presented my Turkish passport. He ridiculed that, and said "as he was Governor there he could do as he liked." He then ordered that I should be shut up in a small room and detained till morning, and then sent away under escort. So I was put in safe keeping with two others, and left through the night. At daybreak two soldiers appeared with a mule, on which were loaded my things. I was ordered to mount, two cakes of dry bread were given me, and in charge of two mounted men I was sent away from Māān, and so for the third time turned my back on Arabia, more and more determined that I would not be discouraged by these seeming failures.

Outwardly, to all appearances, they were failures, but to me they were indications that it was not God's time for the country to be entered, and the experience I had gained on the journeys was very helpful to me when the time was ripe for entering into Arabia. The time between these three trips that I have related was in no wise wasted. Our work in Jerusalem needed help, and there are thousands of Arabs around the Holy City that have never heard the sound of the Gospel. These were not forgotten, and trips to these of some weeks duration helped to fill in time, beside giving many the opportunity of hearing of salvation. On some of these intincrating trips I accompanied our worker at Hebron, and we had some very encouraging times in the country around Hebron. One of these outings was well described in an article that was sent to a magazine in the home land, under the title of

“IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA.”

“*Aug. 3, '99.*”

“I have just returned from a three weeks' stay in the above district among the Arabs; as far as I know many of the places I went to had never been visited by a missionary. In this letter I want to tell you how we have to meet the people and present the Gospel to them. I cannot always begin to preach as soon as I get among the people. I have to wait my chance, sometimes many people can be

talked to at once, another time, perhaps, one or two can be dealt with privately, the latter I prefer. We have much need to be as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves.

“For the first time in my journeys to the Arabs I used a tent; a kind friend gave me some money towards it, and by doing a little work myself in spare time made up the sum needed to buy it. I find it very useful and a great boon. I can shut it up and have my quiet times. It is also a place for the people to come to, so I always have a congregation. Of course, tenting in this land is a hard life—sleeping on the ground, always under a hot sun, and no companions save the Arabs. I often get weary and long for a soft bed and the comforts of home. But this is the only way to reach these wandering people, so I am thankful for health and strength and the language of the people.

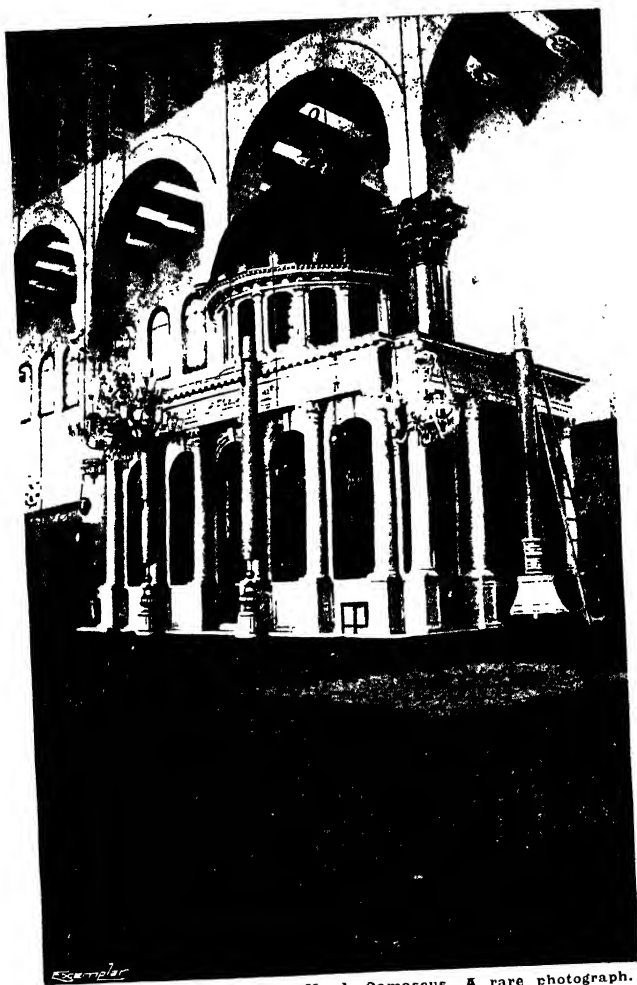
“I left Hebron one day about 9 in the morning, my things on a mule and I on a donkey, the owner of the animals walking. After about four hours jogging up hill and down again we came to a large village named Dawinee. At the entrance I asked where the guest-chamber was; being shown, I went there and found a lot of men in it. I sat down and was given some coffee; no one welcomed me and I saw I had a hard lot to deal with. After about an hour a chance occurred to me to talk about sin, leading up to Jesus. Presently a man said to me, ‘Do you know you are preaching in our mosque, and

you are a Christian, unclean, infidel and heathen; only a short time ago we killed two Jews here and you are all alone.' Then they all got up and went out very angry. I was thinking what I should do, when in came a man and asked me to go to his house and stay the night. 'The people are very bad here,' he said, so I went with him. He put me in a corner of his yard, and as it was sunset I had my supper. After this my host and his uncle came and sat down with me and I began to tell them of Jesus the Saviour. For two hours they listened very attentively, asked many questions. On into the night we talked. They said, 'We never knew these things before, now we have no excuse; we are glad you came, there is no way but Jesus.'

"Next morning early, as I lay as they thought asleep, I heard them telling others all I had told them, so my visit was not in vain. I left during the morning, glad that some at least were willing to hear me. After riding about two and a half hours I saw a man in a large cave near the road. As it was noon and very hot I went to him. He received me kindly, invited me in, gave me dinner, bread, and oil, and dirty water. Soon after came two more men that stayed with him in the cave. They were there harvesting. I began to talk with them about Jesus, and for a long time they listened. Then one said he could read. If I had a book to give him he would like one. So I gave him the Gospel of Matthew, and left him reading it to his

companions. From here I reached an encampment of Arabs, put up my tent, and soon had a crowd to stare at me, but, finding them noisy, I shut down the door and went to the guest-tent. During the day had no chance of speaking about Jesus. The people had some visitors and had business to settle, so I got my supper of bread, onions, and water, and then, when all was quiet, went and sat down on the ground in the middle of some twelve or fourteen men. As it was full moon I could see them all. Told them I wanted to have a talk with them, so they told me to go on and talk. When I got to the death of Jesus a man began to play a native fiddle, but was soon told by the others to be quiet, as they wanted to listen. So here again, far on into the night I talked with them, and they agreed that all I had said was good and true.

“Next day found me at Beersheba. I should like to tell you all about that interesting place and how it is to-day, but I should tire of so much writing. Some day I may come home, and then not only tell you about it but show you some pictures of the place and the old wells there. I stayed at Beersheba one day, gave some Gospels to Arabs that could read, then left, hoping some day to return and spend a long time with the people in those parts. Next stop in a small village for two days. The people here very fanatical and rough, but was able to deal quietly with a few individuals. In the next village stayed only a few hours, had a



Eschmuler
Tomb of John the Baptist's Head, Damascus. A rare photograph.

straight talk with the Moslem priest, sowed good seed, and left praying God to water it. On to another village; found the people very nice here. After supper many came round the tent, and far on into the night I was able to talk to them, and they were very attentive. Here I left quite a few Gospels, the people being glad to receive them. And so I went on from place to place. Sometimes the people were rough or fanatical, and I could not do much, and again they were kind and would listen. After about eighteen days I began to get weary of the hot sun and hard ground, so turned my face homeward, calling in at villages on the way."

Several journeys such as this one were undertaken from time to time. Sometimes I had company in the shape of a gentleman who was desirous of seeing and studying the Arab in his everyday life. On one of these trips we reached as far as Kadesh Barnea, and had some rough experiences there. Beersheba is a place full of opportunities for telling of Jesus, so many Arabs come to the wells there to water their flocks and herds. In 1900 I made a trip into that part of Eastern Palestine known as the Druze country. I had once before been among these strange people, and had been much encouraged, especially by the way they bought the Scriptures. Whilst sitting with a crowd of men in a guest-room I heard them talking about making up a party to go to a place named Kaf. The name sounded familiar to

me, and I looked it up in my maps and found that it was the first stopping-place for the caravans between Damascus and Mecca. Here, then, it seemed to me, was the open door into Arabia. I kept my own counsel for the time until I reached a place in which I knew two brothers, friends I had made years before. I spoke to them about a journey into Arabia *via* Kaf, and they thought it possible, although dangerous for me as a Christian. But before we parted they promised me that if I came to them in their town on the edge of the desert they would do what they could to help me accomplish my purpose. Here, then, at last came my opportunity; it had been long delayed, but now it had come. I hastened to make the best of it. The cool of the year was approaching, and thus more favourable for crossing the sandy desert to reach Kaf and the places beyond. Many of my friends thought I ought to wait still longer, and not start out alone; but as our Board was urging me to do something, I felt constrained to start. Once again Scriptures were packed, and the needfuls, all too few, were stowed away into saddle-bags, and, having made terms for two animals and one man, I was ready for the fourth, and what proved to be very successful, journey of 750 miles into the hitherto closed land. The story of that trip must be told in other chapters.

CHAPTER IV.

Leaving for the Jowf. To the Edge of the Desert.

PREVIOUS failures had not discouraged me sufficiently to make me give up the idea of reaching the district and town of the Jowf, the most important and largest town in Northern Arabia. Although difficulties, dangers, and hindrances might be expected, to have anticipated them would only have led to discouragement. Many of our friends thought that God's time had come for another attempt to be made to reach some part of the regions beyond Moab and Edom. We had hoped that a travelling companion would have been forthcoming, but no volunteer was on hand. Accordingly with some reluctance our little community had to let me go alone. On Thursday morning, the 13th day of December, 1900, a few friends came to our home in Jerusalem, and in prayer we committed each other to God's keeping, not knowing how long it would be before we should thus gather round the Mercy-Seat again. Meanwhile two pack-horses were being loaded outside.

Four cases of Arabic Scriptures, tracts, and leaflets, the most limited quantity of bare necessities for the anticipated journey, and one man to accompany me the first few days of my journey, made up the advance party and equipment of the first missionary journey into Arabia from the North.

A few friends went with me a little way, but the time came to say the final "Good-bye." It was easy enough to bid farewell to the grown-ups, but the last straw came from my little four-year old, when, on stooping down to kiss him, he said in his childish voice, "Will you be long, Dadda?" It was a question that none could answer. The future was only known to God. Jumping on top of one of the loads we got away, wondering when I should see those same kind and praying friends again, and pondering as I rode along, what would be the outcome of this quiet, simple, inexpensive advance movement toward the land and birthplace of the great antagonist of Christianity, the religion of Islam.

Calvary outside the wall, and the Mount of Olives on the east, were soon left behind; a last look at Jerusalem from the Bethany road, and then the quiet little village itself was passed, with its screaming children clamouring for "backsheesh." Down into the valley, and on as far as the Good Samaritan's Inn, where a drink of water was begged from the lonely occupant of that venerable hostel, who ekes out an existence by selling a few drinks, &c., and

providing hasty cups of coffee for passers by. Soon we see Jericho in the distance, and are snugly accommodated by the kind-hearted keeper of the Jordan Hotel. Here I met that cordial friend of travellers to the Holy Land, the Hon. Selah Merrill, U.S. Consul at Jerusalem, who, with his two sisters, were seeking a short time of rest and refreshment in the cool and quiet of Jericho. Early next morning we were off again and pursued our way over the plains of Jordan, crossed the swiftly flowing river, on over the plains and up into the mountains of Gilead. Toward evening we came to a Circassian settlement at the head of the Wady Seir. In vain we tried to get a shelter from the threatening storm. But the Circassian in those parts has no love for the stranger and we were driven from door to door until we decided to spend the night in the open, even if it involved sitting up and watching all night.

On the outskirts of the village we met a woman who shouted at us in a very unceremonious style, "Where are you going at this time of the day; it is now sunset, and the night is near." We replied, "We have tried to find a guest-room, but no place is open to us." Her reply was, "My house is open to all comers; turn aside, and spend the night with us."

So accepting her invitation and obeying her order to follow her, we soon found ourselves lodged in her limited space styled a house. We soon found that we were not the only occupants of those four walls.

One corner contained not only our two horses, but the owner's possession in the way of live stock—a mule, two donkeys, yoke of oxen, some sheep and goats, and the usual crowd of cocks and hens. Add to this our host and hostess, four small dirty children, and the circle was complete. It is needless to make mention of the innumerable company of jumpers, who, by their persistent efforts at feasting, kept me reminded of their presence.

Supper of bread and fried eggs was served, apologies made for the absence of coffee, and then we settled down for a talk, which I soon turned into a religious direction. Introducing the Book we spent a time in reading and speaking of Salvation, much to the interest of and, I trust, lasting good of these simple people. Tired out we lay on the mud floor, wrapped up in our native cloaks and tried to get rest, but it was difficult. Early next morning we were about. The good woman kindly offered us a batch of bread, if we would wait whilst she baked it, which we did.

The next two days led us to Es-Salt (Ramoth-Gilead) and Gerash, and on to Edrei in Bashan. On the way I met some of my Kerak friends, returning from Damascus, where they had been compelled to go, carrying goods for the Turkish Government. The next day, our sixth out, dawned cloudy and windy, but, hoping for fair weather, we set out. We had been going for about four hours, with our faces set against a cold east wind, when it

began to rain, then hail, and soon we were drenched. We could see far ahead of us the only place of shelter, that being the old town of Bosrah, one of the giant cities of Bashan, with its massive castle. Our intention had been to evade this place, and so escape the possibilities of being captured by the Turkish officials and sent home under escort, as on former occasions in the south. However, as the storm continued we were forced to enter the town. We decided to seek the shelter of some guest-room in the quarter of the town farthest away from the castle, in which the soldiers and officers were quartered. But man proposes and God disposes, to show that He can and will deliver. We entered the town on the north side, clambering over ruined houses and tumbled-down walls. We tried the first house we came to only to find the guest-room full to overflowing. We walked up and down the narrow, muddy streets, hoping to find shelter, but the same answer came from every door: "The sudden storm has filled the guest-room, you must seek elsewhere." One man told us he had just come from the house of the Governor, and that his large guest-room was empty. We turned away again, and were leading our beasts along a narrow street, when we came face to face with a man whose dress proclaimed him an official. He stopped and asked us, "Who we were," "Where we were from," "Where we were going," &c., &c., to all of which we gave answers. On hearing we were looking for shelter he said,

"Come with me, I will find you and your animals shelter at the Governor's house." We could say or do nothing, but just obey and follow. In a few minutes we entered the large courtyard of the head man, and stood at the guest-room door. The servants (in the absence of the master) greeted us, and carried our belongings into the large room. Our horses were taken off to the stable. A large wood fire was burning on the floor in the middle of the room. We sat down and warmed ourselves at the fire, thankful for the shelter from the cold and rain outside. The official that had brought us to the place had gone away and left us. I engaged the few men in conversation, and was glad to learn that the Governor was not a Turk, but an Arab and of local descent. This was encouraging, as I might look for better treatment from such a one rather than from an outsider. After a time the official returned clad in full uniform, with his sword on, as sign of authority. He said to me, "My business as inspector is to examine all cases and goods that are brought into this place, get up and open your boxes, so that I may see what they contain." My reply was short but to him bitter, "Never; this is no custom-house." He tried first by persuasion, then by threats, to get me to open up my baggage. But I had one reply, "No." At last he said, "If you wont open them, I will." I said, "Go ahead, then, where you like." I had told him what they contained, but he said I lied. "You have guns and

powder with which to arm the Arabs and get them to rise against the Government," he said. He was, however, too wise a man to touch my belongings, and he again tried persuasion. At last I said, "I will only open my goods for your inspection on two conditions. First, that you bring from the British Consul, also the Turkish Governor in Damascus (three days' journey distant), written orders that I must do so; or, secondly, that you accompany me to Damascus, and, in the presence of the British Consul, if he so orders, I will open for your inspection." With this he went away, saying he was going off to see the head man. After we had supped, the head man came to sit with us. He asked many questions, which I answered. He requested my Turkish passport, which I produced. After examining it, he handed it back, saying it was all right. He then told me that according to orders from the government no Europeans were allowed in those parts, and he had orders to send back under escort all that came along. But, he said, "As you seem to be almost an Arab, and are going to Damascus, may God go with you and give you peace." He little knew or thought what a long time it would be, or what a long way round I was going to get to Damascus. We settled down to a talk. I told him about the officious inspector, and he told me not to mind him. With this he came in, and asked to be given permission by the head man (my host) to open my luggage. He got this reply: "To-night this

man is my guest, and as such you must not touch him or his belongings whilst under my roof. In the morning, when he leaves me, you can do as you like, but under my protection he or his must not be interfered with; we respect and protect all who come under our roofs." With this he went away, and I saw no more of him. I then introduced the New Testament, and we sat until past ten o'clock reading and speaking about Jesus. On leaving me to go to his own apartments he accepted a copy of the New Testament in Arabic.

Next day dawned dull and misty. We decided to make a start, hoping for finer weather. When we got outside the town and turned our faces east, in which direction we were going, we could see in front of us the old, but very prominent castle of Sulkhud, away some twenty-five miles distant. It was our wish to get beyond that place and spend the night in Orman, a large Druze settlement, where I was to give up my man and horses and let them return to Jerusalem. Our way lay over a wide level plain, the road, a small worn path, oft-times difficult to follow because of the stony nature of the ground. About noon we reached a little village called El-Ghusm, through the midst of which we had to pass. I saw some very old and interesting doors here, solid slabs of basalt, turning on hinges that were a part of the stone, and let into sockets. I was fortunate in getting a good picture of these stone doors. After leaving this



Stone Doors in Bashan. Rare.

place the sky clouded over, and another storm came on. The wind, rain, and hail made it impossible for us to hold up our heads and look ahead; our horses turned against it and got off the track, and soon we discovered we had lost the way. My compass told me we were going south instead of east. Turning in the latter direction we tried again, but all to no purpose. For hours we persevered, but seemed to get no further on. A mist had risen, enough to cover from our view the old castle by which we had to pass. We were cold and wet, and began to think we might have to spend the night in the open, for evening was drawing on.

Presently, Mohammed, my man, saw smoke rising away in the distance. How gladly we hailed it, and jumping off our animals, led them in the direction that it was to be seen. We found it going up from a small hamlet of about thirty houses. We rode up to the door of the first one we came to, and received a hearty "Welcome" from the men inside. We would not have chosen the place for its beauty or cleanliness, but because of our condition and the elements, we were glad to avail ourselves of the accommodation available. Our things were carried in and huddled up in a corner. We were offered seats on some old mats round the fireplace. Some fuel, in the shape of dried manure, was brought, and an attempt at making a fire was made, but it resulted in more smoke than flame or heat, and I was made to weep bitter tears from smarting eyes.

Some bread was brought us, and a kind of treacle called "dibs," in which we dipped the former. Hunger made it welcome and enjoyable. On asking where we were, we found that we were about two hours off the track, and some two-and-a-half hours ride from the castle. My idea had been to pass the castle about dusk, so as possibly to escape the notice of the Turkish soldiery that were stationed there. But again my plans were put away in order that I might learn by experience what I had often sung:—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

This I learned on the morrow.

After supper the men of the hamlet in which we were, and which was named Moonaythree, gathered in to talk and sip coffee with us. My business was soon disclosed and I introduced Bibles and Gospels. Some of the men could read, and to my surprise, intelligently. They bought some books from me, paying for them in kind—dried figs, flour, or eggs. When time came for sleep I, clad in another man's clothes (because my own were too wet and were hung up to dry in the smoke), curled up on the hard floor, and in spite of small company, cold, and draughts was soon wrapped in Nature's sweet restorer "balmy sleep." The reader will gather from these records that pioneer mission work is not the easiest, or most conducive to comfort. Let the reader of these pages take up the privilege of daily

remembering at the Throne of Grace those who represent the home-section of the Church by going into new fields and among new peoples, so that all may at least know of a Saviour from sin. Next morning I was accosted by a man that had been driven in by the storm and had lodged in a house near by. He had heard about the books I had, and wanted some to take to his town some distance away N.E. To him I disposed of eight copies—six Testaments and two Bibles—also giving him an assortment of tracts and leaflets. I heard about these some months later on, that they were well received and were being read with much interest. As the morning was fine we did not stay long, so getting directions how to regain the track we started.

Coming up out of the depression in which we had passed the night, we saw ahead of us the old castle, our landmark of yesterday. I was almost certain if only we could get beyond the castle no more hindrances from the Government might be looked for, because beyond that place they exerted very little power. But the thing was to pass unobserved, and as the path passed close under the castle it seemed impossible to get by unnoticed. We could see the soldiers moving about on the castle walls and as we drew nearer the north side, the sentry on guard was very prominent. My man quite lost heart and made up his mind to be taken and sent back. I tried to encourage him by reminding him how we had escaped detention at Bosrah, and told him that

God would help us. When we got quite near to the hill leading up to the castle a thick fog came on, quite an unusual thing in those parts, and under cover of the fog we rode on until we came to several paths leading in different directions. Had it been clear I could easily have found my way, having gone over the country once before. We took the wrong path and soon found we were wrong, but could not right ourselves because of the dense fog. I said to Mohammed, "If only the fog would open for a moment and let me see the castle I should know where we were and how to steer." No sooner had I said the words than the fog divided for a moment, but sufficient for me to catch a glimpse of the castle, which I recognized as the N.E. angle. Getting off my horse I led him back and soon found the track again. Through that dense fog we walked, passed and saluted the sentry but did not see him, on past the Governor's house, and out on to the open ground beyond the castle and town. Five minutes after passing these the fog disappeared, the sun shone brightly, and we saw behind us the castle and house that sheltered the representatives of a Government opposed to all Christian movements for the spread of the Gospel.

I recognized in this second marked deliverance, the hand of God, and was encouraged to go on, believing that God would prosper this simple movement toward Arabia. One hour after passing this place we reached the large Druze town of Orman,

situated on the edge of the sandy plains that lead away towards the Jowf. This was the first stage of our journey, and although some parts of it had been rough, yet I felt that the good hand of God had been on me, and I had the assurance that the next stage of the journey would be accomplished in His own way and time.

We put up in a large guest-room on the outskirts of the town. My hosts consisted of three brothers, all of which treated me kindly. I proved here the truth of the Arab proverb, "Mountain can never meet mountain, but man may meet man." One of the brothers knew me, having met me in Damascus two years before. My things were stowed away out of sight and I was given to understand that I was to be quite at home. So on the 20th of December I took up my quarters among these strange people, the Druzes, with their secret religion. Early next morning Mohammed left me, taking with him the horses. He begged me to return to Jerusalem with him, reminding me of the danger and hardships I should have to endure if I went any further. After he had gone I felt that another cord had been severed that was likely to have kept me from the desire of many years. I was sorely tempted to give way and return but the thought of the promises in Psalm cxxi. settled the matter. I had no idea what the future would reveal; that we must leave for the next chapter,

CHAPTER V.

From Orman to Kaf and Ithera

A PROLONGED stay at Orman gave me a good opportunity for mission work among a people that, to my knowledge, had never been visited before. One thing certain, no copy of the Scriptures had been taken there, or if so, had been lost sight of. My first few days were spent in visiting among the people in their homes. I enquired for the Scriptures, but found no trace of them. I had daily opportunity for speaking with the people about Salvation and the Saviour.

After supper, two hours was generally spent with the guests that had come in to spend the night. The best attention was given to all I said, and these evening gatherings oftentimes resulted in the sale of a few Gospels or Bibles. These were carried away to different places by the owners as they went to their homes next day. In Orman itself I left about forty copies of the New Testament—many of them were bought by big boys that were able to read quite well. Some kind friend had sent me from England, some time before, fifty copies of the life



Druze Chiefs.

of Joseph and the Gospel of John bound together, these I found very useful and most acceptable among these people. One day I entered a house and found, sitting on the floor near the fire, an old Greek Priest. I engaged him in conversation, and soon found that he was, like hundreds of others in a like capacity, entirely ignorant of Salvation by Faith in Christ; he also told me he had never had a Bible. He could read well, so having with me a few extra good quality of binding Arabic Bibles, given by friends in America, I offered him one. He very reluctantly accepted it, thinking that such good fortune was not for him. The same day I saw him ride off to the village he lived and officiated in, with his newly acquired present wrapped in a handkerchief, and stored away in his bosom. The days spent in Orman were most unpleasant and comfortless. Most of the time it rained or snowed, causing deep mud and slush. The only fuel was dried manure. I much preferred to endure the cold rather than the thick, stinking smoke that issued from the smouldering mass on the floor in the middle of the room.

At night I had to lie on the hard floor, with only a straw mat under me. A covering was given me that was full of vermin, so that it is needless to say I did not use it after the first night. The people were very kind in asking me to their homes to a meal, generally made of large white peas boiled, and then well covered with oil or strong fat melted

down. These meals, always served hot, were very acceptable and helped to warm me, and I was very thankful to God for such a provision. There being no shops I was unable to buy any food, and the Arabs will rarely sell food to a stranger. I shall never forget the Christmas Day I spent in that place. Heavy snow had fallen followed by rain, which turned the whole place into a mud pond. It was also very cold, and as no fuel was to be had because of the snow and rain, I had to sit about all day enduring the cold and damp. The roofs of the houses being only mud, it is an easy matter for the rain to penetrate and come through into the house. Such was the case this Christmas Day. The rain was dripping through in some eight places, and it was a difficult matter to find a dry spot even in the house. Soon after my advent into Orman, I began asking questions as to the possibility of getting to the next place I wanted to reach—a spot marked on the map as Kaf.

I gathered it was some six days' journey away S.E., that the country between was waterless, and very dangerous to travel over because of roving bands of Arabs that were always on the look out for passers by. The people in Orman were not much acquainted with the name Kaf. I found in common everyday talk they always used the word "Kurreyya-tayn," which means "two villages," or oftentimes they spoke of them as "Deree-el-milh," that meaning the "salt district," as the work of the Arabs

there was that of salt gathering, which they sold to the people who organized caravans for the purpose of getting this everyday commodity. When I made known the fact that I wanted to visit the settlement of Kaf, the people shook their heads and said "Don't go, the Arabs there are a bad lot; when we go there, in large parties, we never let the rifles out of our hands." As I was importunate, my host said he would try and find me a Bedouin that would take me to Kaf. From time to time such desert rangers came into Orman, and for money could be induced to conduct travellers over the sands. As they knew fairly well the whereabouts of the Arabs, they were the best suited to guide one in safety to Kaf. Two or three such men were found, but on being told that the intended traveller was a Christian, they at once said they would have nothing to do with such people, as their religion made them the enemies of God and the enemies of the followers of Mohammed. It was soon very evident that I must wait a long time to find a Bedouin willing to take me, so I requested my host to undertake for me. He gave me many fair promises, but kept none of them. After all attempts had failed, and it seemed unlikely that I should get on, I one day stated my case to the Sheikh (chief-man), of the place, and asked him to help me. He was a very nice, fatherly old man, and set about advising me not to go. Again I had brought before me the dangers of the desert, the fatigue, and the possi-

bilities of death from thirst, or the fanaticism of the Arabs of Kaf.

I told the Sheikh I was willing to face all that, and as I was trusting God to protect and keep me, I believed He would do so. Promising to free the chief from all responsibility if he would help me to get away, he at last said he would make arrangements for me to go on the morrow. I went back to my lodging, repacked my books and few belongings, sewed some of my money into the waist-band of my trousers, giving the remainder to my host to keep for me until my return at some unknown future date. Money given like this as a trust, is quite safe, even in a stranger's keeping. Next morning I went to the Sheikh. He began to make excuses for not being ready to start me, went over all I had heard before, and again he tried to persuade me to give up the journey. I reminded him of his promise, and told him that as a Sheikh I looked to him to keep his word, not break it. This put him on his mettle. He called a man and told him to get a camel, load up my things, letting me ride on top, and take me out and hand me over to the owner of the first Arab tent we came to. The order was soon obeyed, and we rode off.

We went until sunset, but found no tents; spent the night out, and early next morning started again. In the afternoon we saw a few tents away in the distance, and went to them. Our reception was not a very hearty one, and I saw I was not very

welcome. We were asked in, my things were carried in and piled up one on the other. The man that had come with me told the men in the tent where I wanted to go; they received the news very sullenly. Then he said he would return to Orman. But I felt constrained to ask him to stay the night with me, and it was well he did. We had supper, all sitting round the same dish, and used our fingers in place of spoons, &c. Being very tired I was soon asleep, not waking until morning, and was then roused by finding the heavy tent-cloth down on me. I crawled out from underneath, and saw the women pulling down the tent previous to moving. I asked them why they were doing this so early in the day? Their reply was, "The men have ordered that we move to another place; they fear to give shelter to a Christian, one that is unclean, and would cause trouble to come on us. Soon the tent and their household goods were loaded up, the cocks and hens tied on top of the load. The few sheep and goats had been led off early in the morning.

The little nomad community were soon off, leaving my companion of the previous day and myself standing there alone. He suggested that he should ride the camel and go and look for more tents and return again to me. I was to stay and watch over the luggage. I objected, as I knew that if once he got away on the camel it was very doubtful if I should ever see him again. So I said, "Leave the camel with me, whilst you go and look for more Arabs."

He consented, and went off, leaving me about seven in the morning. Noon came, and he did not return, and I waited until nearly four in the afternoon, and was beginning to think he had really left me, when I saw him coming. He had found one tent near by, and had spent the day with the men, talking, eating, and sipping coffee, not caring about me out under the hot sun, hungry and thirsty. Again we loaded, and set off for the tent, reaching it in about an hour. I sat down and ate some bread, and was glad to gather from the conversation of the men that a large caravan was expected to pass that night, on their way to Kaf; they were going to get salt. After supper we talked, and settled that if possible I should join the caravan, and so reach Kaf with them. It was full moon, we were sitting round the fire in the tent door, when a man came in and said he could hear the bells of the camels, and it was the caravan.

Quickly my things were loaded on a camel. I jumped on top, and my new host led off into the desert. By the light of the moon I could see coming toward us a great dark mass: that was the caravan. We went for about a quarter of an hour, and then stopped to await the arrival of the caravan. Soon some Arabs on horses galloped up to us, shouting to us, "Who are you? What do you want?" Their questions were soon answered. Then came the first part of the great company, made up of about four hundred camels; they passed

us, then a second, then a third, and then the last part. Each section was guarded by about fifty horsemen, armed with long spears, rifles, swords, and revolvers.

As they passed us the man with me kept shouting out the names of men he thought likely to be in the company. The first three sections of that great caravan, made up of sixteen hundred camels, passed, and no one answered the call of my man. In the last part, however, some men were found, and with a hasty explanation as to who I was and where I wanted to go, my baggage and self were transferred to another camel, and I was soon in full swing with that moving mass, on my way to Kaf. No terms had been made as to payment for the animal I was on, or any arrangement made about food and water. I joined the caravan at quarter to nine in the evening, and was supposed to be four and a half days' journey from Kaf. As we rode along I got into conversation with some of the men near me. They told me we were to make the journey in easy stages, because the camels, being loaded with wheat and barley that was to be bartered for salt and dates, could not travel long distances without resting. But I soon found that they were only telling me lies, so that, as they said when I told them afterwards, "I should not ride with a heavy heart." We rode all that night until half-past six the next morning, when a halt was made. "If you want to sleep do so," they said, "for we only rest two

hours." I lay down on the sand, covered myself with my native cloak (abba), and was soon fast asleep. But I was roused in a quarter of an hour, and told to "get up, the caravan is off." And so it was, they were nearly all gone, and so, jumping on my camel again, we soon followed, just twenty minutes after we had put down.

On and on we went, never stopping until half-past five in the afternoon. The camels were made to kneel down, and rumour said we should rest for hours. As the men were about to remove the loads a cry was raised that Arabs were near.

Looking up I saw on some high ground overlooking us some mounted men, about ten. Some of our horsemen jumped on their horses and made off, The new comers galloped away. Our men, although riding as hard as they could, fired their rifles after the pursued; one was hit in the arm causing him to drop his spear. I had mounted a hill near at hand and watched them. Our men were gaining on the others, and soon came up with them. Being outnumbered they threw down their arms. They were from a large tribe that were camped about a mile away. Our men made them return with them. The order was given to load and start, and just fifteen minutes after putting down we were on the move again. A man thrust some hard bread into my hand as we moved off, and I nibbled at it as I rode along. The captured Arabs were made to go with us, and were placed in the midst of the caravan.

This was to prevent them from returning to their camp and calling others, who may have harassed the caravan all night. We rode on through that night. As the sand was hard in those parts I walked a good bit of the way, for two reasons—to keep awake, and to keep warm. The day dawned but no halt was made. The captured Arabs were allowed to return, as there was now nothing to fear from them or their people. The sun rose, but on we went. About ten o'clock some of the men called to me, "Look! see the palms, they belong to Kaf; we shall soon be there."

About eleven o'clock we rode into the place, and in the square formed by the houses the camels were made to kneel down, were unloaded, and given food. We had ridden for thirty-eight hours with only half-an-hour's stop. The return journey was made in six days. It is needless to say I was tired, thirsty, and hungry, but the thought of really having got to Kaf—the desire of years realized—made me forget the fatigue of the journey in the joy of being there. I left the hubbub of the square and went off to the palm gardens near by and jumped for joy, then sang the Doxology, and afterwards gave thanks to my Heavenly Father for the fulfilment of the promises I had trusted in, as written in the 121st Psalm. I then went to a spring of warm sulphur water and had a wash, then returned to the men in the square. They took me into a small house near by, the owner of which was known to them. A

large tray of dates was brought in and we ate as many as we could, then, being tired after our long and hurried ride, I lay down on the floor, put my head on my saddle-bags, and was soon asleep. When I awoke it was nearly five o'clock, and the sun was getting low. I went outside and found some of the men I knew. One of them said to me, "Come, I will take you to the Chief's house, and ask him to care for you." I went with him to the adjoining village. He was sitting outside with a lot of men, but rose and came forward to greet me. On being told about me, he said it would be best if all my things were brought and put in his guest-room, and I might lodge there too. He called a boy, told him to take a donkey, and go and bring my things over. Just then I heard a gun go off, and found it was the signal for the caravan to load up and start on its return journey. The men I had travelled down with came to bid me farewell, and persuaded me to go back with them. "Why will you stay with these cursed people?" they asked me. "They will surely kill you because you are a Christian." At last they left me, and I saw the caravan go away. I watched it as it slowly disappeared over the sand hills, and was sorely tempted to go after it, but grace and help was given to overcome the temptation, and I went back to the Chief's house. Never shall I forget the feeling of loneliness that came over me as I made my way back to that room. Everybody about me strangers



The Chief of Kat.

Examply

—not only nationally but religiously, and as I well knew, of a kind not favourable to Christians. The thought that I was the only Christian in the whole district was one that I cannot well describe. As I passed the men gathered in groups, the only word I heard was “Nisraney (Christian) — one of the cursed ones, the enemy of God and all Moslems.” Not having been so exiled among such isolated followers of Mohammed I was not quite sure what treatment I might expect from them. On reaching the Chief’s room, I found him and some men there. Supper was brought in, served up in a large iron pot. I ate my share, not knowing what it was, and even now have no notion off what I supped. All I know is, that it was very hot, slimy, greasy, and tasty, the latter making it appetising. After supper we sat round the open fire on the hearth, and coffee making began. The green berries are roasted over the fire, then pounded in a large wooden mortar. When sufficiently fine the coffee is put on boiling water, and allowed to filter to the bottom of the pot; then boiled up quickly for a few minutes, and stood aside to settle. Sometimes, if guests are on hand, spices are bruised and put in to flavour the coffee. Having stood a few minutes, a small quantity, say about a tablespoonful, is poured into a handleless cup, and given each one present to drink. About four ounces of coffee is put in a pint of water. This makes a very strong and black beverage, and it is drunk without milk or

sugar. A man's generosity is judged by the quantity of coffee he gives his guests. A favourite way of speaking about a good host is to say "The coffee-pot is never off the fire." Coffee is the only luxury these Arabs have; intoxicants have not yet reached them, and they have no native-made drinks that take the place of alcoholic liquors—long may they remain in such a state.

Whilst coffee was proceeding, we were talking about the possibilities of my getting further into the country. Opinions were divided; some thought I could go safely, others said there was much danger, beside hardship and fatigue. The Chief advised my return to Orman, but saw no way of sending me back. Then a man came in and said a party of Arabs had come in, that were leaving early in the morning for Jowf, a large town some eleven days' journey S.E. I had intended, if my way was prospered, to reach this town, it being the largest and most important in Northern Arabia, and I may mention here that Kaf, the place I was then in, was under the government of Ibn Rashced, the Sultan of Arabia, resident in Hayel. The Chief, whose name was Mohammed-el-Bady, sent for the man in charge of the caravan. He soon came, and was told that I wanted to go with them to the Jowf. Would they provide me a camel and let me journey with them? The man at once saw I was a Christian, and gave his answer. "If I took a Christian to the Jowf, I am afraid Johar (the Chief

there) would have me killed for doing such a thing," said he, "so I cannot do it."

Other men were called in but all gave nearly the same answer. One said to me, "If ever you want to see the Jowf you must turn Moslem, as no Christian would be allowed to live there many days." This was somewhat discouraging, but the Chief told me to "keep my heart strong" and we would try again in the morning before they started. Then the matter dropped and I introduced the Bible. A man present, being a good reader, took the Book and began to read. I found him the third chapter of John's Gospel, and as he read a verse I would speak on it. I oftentimes get a man to read for me so that those listening may believe that what they hear is really written in the book they see. Arabs have said that I have made up some of the things that I had been reading to them, but one of their own number reading, does away with that foolish idea. The men that were gathered in were most attentive to all I said. It was something quite new to them.

They asked me lots of questions about the religion and customs of the Christians, pitied us because we could only have one wife at a time, and because we had no date palms in our country. Before separating for the night the man that had been reading for us asked me to give him a Bible. I told him he must buy it. He said he could pay for it in dates if I would take payment that way. I agreed, so next morning he brought me some dates and took

away his book; this led to the sale of eight or nine other copies, either Psalms and Luke bound together, or Genesis and John. I was up early in the morning and out with the Sheikh, who did his best to get the men that were leaving to take me along with them, but they were firm in their refusals. So I had to see them load up and leave, feeling that the possibility of getting on was a very poor one. That day I spent in the homes and gardens of the people. They treated me in a kindly way, but it was spoilt by their continual hard sayings against me as a Christian. That same evening another party of men called in at Kaf to stay the night. In vain my host tried to induce them to take me on, but the same excuse as the previous night was made. I saw them leave next morning and wondered if ever I should get away. After they had gone, Mohammed, my host, came to me and said, "As no one will take you with them I will go with you to the next place named Ithera, and perhaps from there you can get on to the Jowf." About noon he called one of his servants to bring in a camel and his horse, and we were to make a start. The things being loaded on the camel I got on top, he mounted his horse, and we were just riding out of the gate that led into the village when we met about twelve men riding in. They were Chiefs from a tribe camped near by, and had come to visit my host. So we turned back, and I had the choice of waiting another few days, or being sent on in charge of two young men, servants

of the chief. I choose the latter ; they mounted the camel, and I was given the horse to ride. We rode off again and about sunset saw in the distance the palms of Ithera, just about four hours ride between the two places. I noticed the two men oftentimes got off the camel, twice made it kneel down as if to adjust the load, but I found out later on that they had rifled my belongings and had buried them in the sand. I was glad to reach Ithera, but all that happened there must be left for another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

What Happened at Ithera, and the Desert Journey to Jowf

THE guest-room of the Chief of Ithera was quite near the principal entrance to the place. We rode up to the door of the simple room, and I with my few belongings was put down in the entrance. The younger of the two men that had come over with me from Kaf went into the room and shouted to all the men sitting round "We have brought a Christian and stick him on to you ; do what you can with him." In this manner I was deposited in Ithera, and delivered to no one in particular. According to custom the Chief should have been sought out, and I handed over to him personally. As it was no one was responsible for me. I carried my goods inside and put them on one side. There was no salutation of welcome, and no one made room for me. I was left standing just inside the doorway. It was a very large place, about thirty feet long and fifteen wide. The door-

way was in one of the side walls. It was as usual very void of comforts. The floor was strewn with sand on which the men, about thirty in number, were squatting. A black man with piercing eyes sat at the coffee, pouring it out and handing it round. The chamber was put to two uses. The part on the right hand of the doorway was set apart for the accommodation of the men and visitors, that on the left side was used as a stable, and was abominably dirty. There were some horses and camels tied up there that belonged to some Arabs of the Beni Sakhr tribe, that had come in to transact business and were to stay the night. As I stood in the entrance waiting an invitation to join the men, I heard them speculating as to who or what I was. They no doubt thought that I did not know Arabic and so could not understand what they were talking about. A man sitting near me informed the others that I was a Christian from Jerusalem and was to be shunned, because he had visited that city and had seen the Christians there (not Protestants) worshipping pictures and images. This, unfortunately, is all too true, and can be seen any day in any of the churches belonging to the Eastern sects representing Christianity. A man sitting in another part of the assembly differed from the first speaker, and volunteered the information that "I was not a Christian, but one from among the Jews." But a third thought he knew better, and speaking in a loud voice said, "This is neither a Christian or Jew, but one from

among the heathen, an infidel, one that knows not God, nor his apostle Mohammed—on whom be peace.” This information, however, did not satisfy the whole company, evident by one man, who with more boldness than the others rose and said, “ This is neither Christian, Jew, or infidel, but a pig.”

All that know anything about Mohammedans will know that this was the greatest insult possible to offer anyone. To call a man a dog is bad enough, and sufficient to cause life-long enmity, but to liken one to a pig would be beyond forgiveness, and possibly result in death. Having given vent to his ideas about me, the speaker left the place, may be from fear of what he had said, and in came the chief man of the place. He heard the last words of the disappearing speaker, and also what I had ventured to say in reply to criticisms about me. I just said, “ Men, I am neither pig, infidel, or Jew ; I am a Christian, one that worships God, the same God as you do, but not of those Christians who bow down to and worship pictures and images ; as there are four fingers on your hands, each one different from the other, so there are different kinds of Christians.” The old Sheikh then addressed me, saying, “ If you are a Christian go and sit among the cattle.” I did as I was told, and went and sat on the ground between a camel and an old white mare.

I had not been sitting long when in came a man, by whose dress I knew must be a stranger. He soon proved it by walking over to me, putting out

his hand and shaking mine. Never in my life was a proffered hand more acceptable than that. It spoke in a very assuring way of sympathy, pity, and comfort. He sat down beside me, and then followed this short, but to me instructive, conversation in an undertone:—

Stranger.—Who are you and from where do you come?

Answer.—From Jerusalem. I am a Christian, a preacher.

Question.—What do you want here?

Answer.—I am come to see the land, people, towns, villages, and have with me books for sale.

Stranger.—If you value your life you will get out of this as quickly as you can, or the men, who are a bad lot, will kill you.

Question.—What kind of a man is the chief.

Stranger.—Very kind, and has great influence; makes much of his guests.

Question.—Who are you and what do you do here?

Stranger.—I am a Druze, and have the only shop here. I am allowed to remain here because I pretend to be a Moslem.

With this he got up and went away, and I saw him no more during my short stay there. I then pricked up my ears to hear what the men at the far end of the room were saying. I heard them discussing with the Chief plans for getting rid of me, One man offered to cut my throat whilst I was sleeping that night. But the old Chief said, “I will

not have the blood of a Christian on my house and town." Another suggested that the supper that was given me should be poisoned; that would save them killing me, as I should die in my sleep; then I could be buried, and if any one from my people or Government came looking for me (as they would) my grave could be shown, and, if necessary, my body, but no marks would be seen to show that I had been done away with. To this, however, the Chief objected, and it was suggested that I be driven out into the desert to die of hunger and thirst. It was at last settled that I be left until the morning, and the old Chief said, "Lest any harm come to our beasts by having a Christian with them, he had better spend the night in the gardens under the palms. Then supper was brought in, and, after all the others had supped, I was called to eat. I sat down by the large round bowl, and, being hungry, ate and enjoyed an unknown mixture, conveying it to my mouth with my fingers in place of spoon or fork, things evidently unknown in those parts. Having seen the others partake of the same food I knew there was no harm in the dish. Then I was called to follow the Chief, and he led me out into the gardens quite near by. I sat down under a large palm tree and prepared to spend the night in the open. After half an hour the Chief came back again, saying, "I fear if you stay here you will affect the palms in some way, and my crop of dates will fail this year; come with me." He led off, and I

followed him. It was nearly dark. We got outside the walls of the place, and he showed me a solitary tent near by, under the shadow of some old walls. "Go in there and stay," said he, and I did so. Inside this tent I found there was an old man suffering from a very loathsome disease, much like leprosy; he was in a bad state, and was most repulsive. He told me he could no longer be tolerated inside the village, so had been isolated until death relieved him from his sad state. I felt if ever there had been a time that I needed courage and help it was now. I had, by oft reading, learned by heart the 121st Psalm, and I laid claim to verse 7 as never before. The next morning I was up early, and awaited the events of the day. No one came near. I had no idea where my things were. All I had was my pocket Bible, and all I could read in it was the Psalm I have just named, viz., 121. Toward noon I saw a few men with the old Chief, whose name was Khy-Khwan, crossing over in front of the tent. I followed them unobserved. They sat down and began to talk, not knowing I was near and listening to all they were saying. I gathered from their conversation three things:—

1st. That a caravan was to be made up to leave for the Jowf on the following Friday (this was Wednesday).

2nd. That the old Chief himself was to conduct the caravan.

3rd. That the two parties I had seen leave the

last town, Kaf, had both, for some cause or other, been delayed, and were to join the caravan leaving on the Friday.

These things made me glad and I determined to face the Chief about them. The men having gone away I followed Khy-Khwan and spoke to him thus, "You are going to the Jowf, will you take me with you?" He gazed at me in wonderment. Said he, "You will never leave here alive, and if you did and reached the Jowf you would surely be killed. This is the land of the Moslem no Christians come here; you are our enemy and the enemy of God." I replied, "I will pay you to take me with you, and am ready to face the Jowf with its dangers." His answer was, "Do you know how far it is to the Jowf? The desert journey, the dangers from robbers, hunger, thirst, and fatigue will kill you." Again telling him I was prepared for all that and had no fear, I asked him, "How much do you want to take me—for the ten days journey there, and back again, provide me a camel, food, and water for the journey, and help me all you can whilst we stay in the Jowf?"

His answer was short and decided, "Two English pounds a day—ten days going, ten returning, and a stay of fifteen, making thirty-five days—put me down seventy gold pieces, English ones, and I will take you." I told him it was impossible, that it was more money than I had; he must ask less. "If you can't give it, go back to your place," he said, so I returned to the isolated tent. I was strongly im-

pressed that it was God's ordering that I had come to Ithera just when I did. To find a man like Khy-Khwan just about starting to conduct a caravan to the Jowf was most providential, as was the fact that the different parties I had seen leave Kaf had been delayed here in Ithera. I felt it was the time to act, so on returning to the tent I sat down to pray and meditate. I was led to make an offer of money to the Chief, but not a large sum as he expected. I had a few Napoleons (French gold pieces value 16s. each) sewed into the band of my trousers, so ripping out four of these I went off to find the Sheikh. I found him alone in the guest-chamber. Walking up to him I held out in my hand the money, at the same time saying, "If you will let me go to the Jowf with you, find me camel, water, and food, I will give you these four gold pieces." He looked at the money and then at me, then said, "Give them to me now and we'll start after to-morrow. I said, "No ; you come outside, and before the men of the place I will give them to you ; they must be witnesses." Had I given him the money most likely he would have denied ever having had it. So away we went, and, in presence of the men of Ithera, the money was handed over and the bargain made. That night I was allowed to sleep in the guest-room with a horse on one side of me and a camel on the other, my only fear being that the horse might tread on me, as I was on the floor. But I had a good night's rest, and on waking next morning found the

place empty. I went out to a spring near by, had a wash, the first one for many days, then went in search of some of the men. I met a woman, who turned out to be Mrs. Khy-Khwan ; she kindly asked me to go into her house. I did, and she set before me a dish of dates, some warm bread, and a bowl of sour milk. Off this I made a sumptuous breakfast. She talked long with me. Sympathized and pitied me because I had had to run away from my own land, people and kindred, and seek shelter among the Arabs. "Tell me," she asked "what crime you committed, or who you murdered, that you had to run away." I told her the real reason why I had come to the desert region of Arabia, but, poor thing, could not believe that I would leave wife, children, home, and country, and live such a life as I was enduring, just to tell people about a Saviour. I asked about the proposed journey. She told me her husband went once a year, and this was the time. He was taking the yearly tax from the district that had to be paid to the Chief of the Jowf, who would send it on to the capital city, Hayil. She told me the men were a "cursed" lot, but encouraged me by saying, "If you are with Khy-Khwan no one will hurt you." spoke to her about her soul, but I got the usual reply, "We women are no better than our camels or donkeys ; we have no souls, when we die there is an end of us." Then I went out, and in walking about saw water skins on all hands being prepared for the

journey. In a garden by a cistern there were four ready to be hung on the camels. The call to noon-day prayers was heard, and I returned to the house. As soon as prayers were over, a hurry and bustle began. A camel was driven in, and I was told to load up my things quickly as the caravan was off. I put my belongings on the camel, jumped on top, and rode outside the village. There I met the Chief, who sent a man to get me a stick to guide my beast with, as he had no halter or rope on his head. Then we started; my load slipped off, so did I, because it was not tied on. Some men were sent to adjust and secure it, and I soon overtook the others. I counted about one hundred and twenty camels and about eighty men in the party. Some of them were especially unpleasant and rude fellows. They gathered round me, showing their daggers and guns, reminding me over and over that such things were for Christians. They told me I should never reach the Jowf alive; they would leave my dead body on the sands. They began extolling the religion of Islam, and told me I must change mine if I lived in their country. The start for the Jowf was not encouraging from a human point of view, but inwardly I felt that God was with me, and the arrangements I had been able to make, and for so small a sum of money, encouraged me to believe that all would be well. I did not ignore the fact that there were dangers, but relied on the promise that they should not prevail over me. We rode

away from Ithera about one o'clock, and went on until sunset. Just before five o'clock a cry was raised, "Look behind." Coming after us, as hard as they could ride, were a party of wild Bedouins—they were robbers. The camels were all driven up close together, and made to kneel down—this was for protection. The old Chief came to me and said, "Your being with us has caused us this trouble, and the first day out, too." He then told me to lie down and seek shelter between the camels, for he feared I should be hit by a bullet as they had begun to fly about us. I did not care to take such an undignified position as was suggested, and told Khy-khwan so. He said he feared I might be killed, and he very vehemently cursed the day that I came to him. Quite an exciting battle took place between the enemy and our men, some of the latter acquitting themselves very well. I congratulated them afterwards, and we became more friendly. The robbers made off, and the order was given to spend the night where we were. My supper of dates and heavy bread was given me, after which I lay down on the sand and was soon asleep. The robbers appeared again after about two hours, but were driven off.

Next morning we moved off at sunrise, and soon reached a spring of brackish water. Here we filled up our skins, and moved on as quickly as possible. We never linger around water. Other Arabs might come up, and, if unfriendly, a quarrel might ensue.

Much of the fighting among the Bedouin and Arabs is caused by quarrelling over water—springs, and wells (Genesis xxvi. 18-21). That night we drank all the water we had carried away from the spring, and hoped next day to find more. But we found none for three days, and consequently were very thirsty. The evening of the third day our men decided to search for water, and set out in all directions. Presently one was seen waving his "abba" (cloak) over his head, thus indicating that he had been successful. The camels set off at a run toward him, I brought up the rear. On reaching the spot I saw about ten of the men down on their knees digging in the sand just as a dog would do. I asked where the water was, and received the answer, "Wait, you are a town man and don't know the wilderness; we are sons of the desert, and know how to manage." Down they dug—three feet, four feet, five feet, but no appearance of water. Then instead of sand came gravel, and soon the valuable liquid that we were all so anxious to have a drink of. In turn we were given drink. The men had pity on me and gave me the first draught, knowing I was not used to such long abstinence. The water was dipped up in their dirty greasy skull caps, that had never known soap and very little fresh air, being worn next the head, under the large handkerchief, that serve as a covering for the head. It was no time to stand on ceremony; we were all too eager for a drink to care how it was conveyed to our mouths

from its gravelly bed. My cup and enamelled bowl would have come in useful there, had they not been stolen by some one anxious to relieve the Christian of those useful additions to a very limited outfit. Having water we could have bread for supper instead of dates. Dough was made, and baked in a bed of hot ashes on the sand. When taken from the hot coals the thick cake was divided between us; sometimes, if the divider was not kindly disposed toward me, I came off badly, only getting a small piece. On this occasion I had only received a tiny share, not enough to nearly satisfy me, so remembering I had in my saddle bag the remains of what was given me in Orman, sixteen days before, I took it out intending to eat it. It was musty and as hard as a stone. Knowing the dislike the Arab has of seeing bread thrown away, I determined to soak it and give it to my camel to eat. I did this, thinking no one had seen me. Next morning, bread was made and divided out as usual, but none was given to me. I did not ask for any, that would be contrary to custom. So we started on another day. How sorry I was I had given the camel the hard bread; it would have served me now I was so hungry. I might have damped it and managed to allay the hunger, but it was gone. Little did I think that my feeding the camel with these few hard pieces would result in my having to go hungry for the next day, but such was the case. Some of the men saw me soak the musty remains and give it to my

camel, and they thought me wasteful. I told the old Chief about it during the day. He said, he thought I had been given my share, as the usual quantity of flour had been doled out as hitherto. On asking the men who made the bread why none had been given me the answer given was, "The Christian feeds his camel on bread, and as he is wasteful we did not give him any." I tried to explain, but I had committed an offence that could not be easily overlooked. I learned a lesson I shall not soon forget. I well remember the night that followed that day. We put down near a wild palm; water was brought from a small spring about half a mile away. It had been windy all the day, but at sunset a terrible wind from the north-east commenced to blow, whirling the sand in all directions, and so keen and sweeping was the wind that we could not even have a fire, it was carried in all directions. The Chief kindly made a barricade of some of the sacks of wheat we were carrying, but it was of little use, and did not shelter us much. The cold made sleep impossible and I rested little, and was glad when the day broke. The wind ceased with the sunrise, but I was chilled through and was obliged to walk for quite two hours so that I might get warm. We were getting near our journey's end and all were eager to reach the Jowf. Beyond the fatigue of the journey all had gone well. The attitude of the men had changed toward me, but they never lost an opportunity of trying to frighten

me because I was a Christian. We oftentimes saw skeletons of camels on the sand, and twice saw human remains. On coming across a skull one day, the men called my attention to it and tried to impress me with the fact that it was a Christian's skull—one that like myself had ventured into the land of the Moslem, but had perished in the desert, and his remains had been left as a warning to any Christians that came after. "Such will be your fate" was the comforting assurance they offered me. The last night we were out I made another unforgivable mistake. As usual, I was up before daybreak, and had boiled a drop of water to make me a cup of Leibig before starting out. There was no food that morning as we were nearing the end of the journey, and, on picking up my kettle to put into my saddle-bag, I found it still had a drop of water in it, not more than a teacupful. Here was a chance for a wash, so filling my hand I rinsed my face and hands, glad to be able to remove the top layer of dust and dirt. I thought no one had seen me, but alas, eyes were on me, and on asking for a drink later on I was told, "If you use water for washing, you cannot have it for drinking." To explain was useless. I had done a dreadful thing, and could not be forgiven. Soon after I saw the men empty all their water skins out on the sand. And what I fain would have quenched my thirst from was wasted before my eyes. Before us in the distance could be seen the palms of the Jowf, and rearing itself above

the palms was the fine old castle, no one knows how old. I was forbidden to go near it for various reasons. About four in the afternoon we entered this secluded desert-bound town, and were soon lodged in the spacious guest room of the three sons of the Chief, whose name was Johar—or Aboo Amber (the father of Amber).

CHAPTER VII

Arrival at the Jowf, with an Account of All that Befell Me There.

SOON after sighting the old castle I saw men, women, and children coming out to meet their relatives and friends that were arriving from off the desert journey with its dangers and fatigue. For a time all attention was taken off me by the greetings, salutations and welcomings of the long-separated relatives. But soon it was discovered that a stranger was with the party, and for him there was no word of welcome. Such expressions as these were for me: "May God curse him," "The enemy of God and the Prophet, may we be delivered from him," "Infidel, Unclean," and such like were hurled at me by all classes, especially the women and children. I was much interested in the old mud towers that I saw on all hands as I entered the Jowf from the north. I found out afterwards that they were for the purpose of defence. It was impossible to get any pictures of them because of the constant eyes on me. We rode along the



Arabs of the Jowf.

These three men were appointed to be with me during my stay at the Jowf.

side of this beautiful oasis in the desert. The beauty and prosperous condition of the thousands of palms impressed me. The Jowf as a town is about two miles long, and, on an average, a quarter of a mile wide. The houses, many of them, are hidden away in the palms, and so give one the impression at first sight that the place is thinly populated. I learned from the Chief, later on, that there were about 40,000 inhabitants in the Jowf, all told. The buildings, except the castle, are all of mud and sand brick, dried in the sun, some of the houses have three stories, built of course in a very primitive style. The roofs are all flat, protected by a wall about waist high. The women, there secluded, frequent these roofs as they are free from all observation. The interior of the houses are as bare as possible, the hand-mill, coffee-pounder, and an old rug or two being about all that is visible. Most of the houses are doorless owing to the scarcity of wood. The people live mostly out of doors, in the hottest months seeking the shade of the palm groves and gardens, and in the cooler months basking in the sun on the sand. Rain is scarce in the Jowf, they told me three falls a year were about all they had. The water supply is good, drawn up by camels from springs deep down in the earth. There are some warm sulphurous springs there used by the people for ablution purposes. I saw no shops in the town, and on asking how the people got the necessities of life, such as clothing, cooking utensils, coffee, &c.,

they told me they relied on caravans that came from Mecca, Bagdad, or Damascus.

The men make their own "abbas" (cloaks) on rude looms, also a few for sale. I got a very good one for about fourteen shillings. The abbas of the Jowf are much valued and sought after in Palestine and Syria. I also saw men making "mereers," the double rope that they wear on their heads, and was intensely interested in the simple, yet neat, way they did it. Saddle-bags and carpets are also included in the industries of the Jowf. The staple food of the place is dates and "temmin," the latter a cereal inferior to rice. Bread is a luxury and is only eaten by the head men of the place, and that not every day. A kind of bread is made from flour, ground from a small seed almost as fine as sand, and dark red in color. The name of the seed is "semmah," and the taste of the finished article abominable. The people are fortunate in having a good supply of fruit. Beside the many varieties of dates, they told me they had grapes, apricots, plums, citron, melons, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, pumpkin and other things not known to me in English. Like all Eastern towns there were no sanitary arrangements. The only beverage of the Jowfees is coffee; intoxicants there are none—long may it be so. Many of the men smoke, not all. I was agreeably surprised to find so many of the men and boys able to read intelligently, and also to see that many of them possessed watches. The ignorance of outside

affairs surprised me. Absence of posts, telegrams, newspapers and railways, keeps them isolated. Truly Ishmael dwells alone (Jer. xlix. 31). The government of the Jowf, as also Ithera and Kaf, is in the hands of Abdul-Azceez ibn Rasheed, who resides at Hayil, a city six days' journey from the Jowf. He is represented in the Jowf by a very influential old man named Johar, whose fame I had heard some years before. Just, liberal, open-hearted, and firm, he is feared and respected by all that know him or have anything to do with him. He is also responsible for the taxes and good behaviour of a town six hours east of Jowf named Sakaka; report said it was as large and flourishing a place as the Jowf. Time and circumstances did not allow me to pay a visit to this unknown place, much as I should have liked to do so.

Having introduced the reader in this brief way to the Jowf and its people, I will return to my story. A sharp bend in the road revealed the imposing castle of Johar with its four lofty towers on the corners of the outside wall. Our company had gone into all directions,^a and I was riding behind Khy-khwan. He pointed out the castle to me and told me it was the residence of Johar, the Chief. He rode on, I following, until we reached a large square with many men sitting about in the sun. Near by was a large house. We dismounted; many were the greetings for my conductor, but none for me. Then we were invited inside and were asked to be

seated. I was the object of attention ; everybody asking the same question, " What does he want here ; he is a Christian." I kept quiet, and left Khy-khwan to answer all questions, which he did in his own way, not always telling the truth, however. As it was " Rumathan " (the month observed by Moslems for fasting by day and feasting by night) no coffee was made or food brought. We had not been sitting long when a man came in to say Johar had heard of our arrival and was coming to see us. In a few minutes he appeared accompanied by six or eight of his attendants : a short, thick-set negro, clad in many and various coloured garments, and carrying a heavy whip in his hand. We all rose to receive him and he was given the seat of honour at the far end of the large room. He invited Khy-khwan to sit on his right, and me on his left hand. Salutations were exchanged and a few questions asked, and then Johar turned to me, " You are a Christian, eh? "

" Yes."

" What brings you here? "

" To see the Jowf, its people, and to sell God's Word to any that will buy."

" Are you not afraid of the people, or myself? "

" No ; I believe God will keep me, and I believe that under your protection no harm will come to me."

" Have you heard about me before? "

" Yes, in Kerak. I oftentimes heard of you from the

Bedouin that came in to buy corn. Your name is sweet everywhere, and I am glad to be in the Jowf and under your roof."

"I fear you will get killed if you go about here alone. The people are haters of Christians, and may harm you."

"I will be careful and not go far away from the houses," I replied.

He then ordered a man to go and bring a tray of the best dates for me, saying to me, "We are fasting and dare not eat. You must be hungry, don't be ashamed; 'kool wahud ala deenoo' (everyone to his religion)," said he. "Eat," for the dates were before me—enough for twenty men to feed off.

I hesitated, not liking to eat alone, knowing that everyone else was fasting. "I can wait until sunset," I said. "Like you, like me."

But he insisted, and I ate a few of the dates, and whilst thus engaged he rose and went out, followed by his eldest son named Faleh, and his attendants. Soon I was called outside, and was addressed by Faleh, who, here I must say, was a very nice, kind-hearted young man of about twenty-five. "My father says you must not be allowed to remain in the guest-room with the men. Being a Christian, you will defile them; you are unclean; you are to have a small place near by where you must sleep and sit. He will also send three men that will be with you when you go outside—one of them will always be with you in your room." He showed me

a small place adjoining the guest-room; it was about twelve feet deep, four feet wide, and seven feet high, entered by a rude doorway about four feet high; had a door without any fastening on it to secure myself from intruders by day or night. The floor on which I had to lay was made of large stones set edgeways in mud. No air or light could enter except by the door, and that entrance was darkened by a flight of steps that led to an upper chamber, which was the sleeping apartment of the youngest son. My belongings were carried in and put down anyhow. The place was filthy, having been used as a stable and general rubbish-room. I was grateful for this separate place; although not all that could be desired, I had some privacy, and was enabled to pray and meditate without a crowd of curious spectators, and I also had my nights to myself, and was thus saved the unpleasant task every night and morning of looking through my clothes in search of supdry irritating and undesirable creatures that abound in Arabdom, and quickly transfer themselves from man to man, encouraged no doubt by the prospect of something fresh in the way of drink and food. I got my share of visitors in spite of my semi-seclusion. I was invited to supper in the guest-room, and did my best to empty the dish, having been without food for nearly twenty-four hours. In spite of Johar's orders, I was invited to join the men round the fire and partake of coffee with them.

Next morning I was up early, and spent a time at a warm spring washing my clothes. The sight of soap induced others to join me, to take the opportunity of using soap on their hands and heads; so my soap quickly vanished. After a breakfast of dates from a large trayful that had been put in my small room so that I could eat when I liked, I thought I would go over and see Johar at his castle. There were no men about the premises, and I could not find any women. So off I started, and in about fifteen minutes reached the outer wall of the Castle. I walked round it to find the entrance, when suddenly, on the South side, I came upon Johar holding his daily Court of Inquiry. He was mounted on a daïs about three feet high, with his scribe at his side. Before him in a semi-circle sat scores of men, listening to the various cases presented to him to give judgment about. On seeing me he beckoned me to him, and asked me to sit by his side. He finished the case he had in hand, and then turned to me,

“ Did you come over here alone? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Were you not afraid? ”

“ No.”

“ Have you no fear of anyone? ”

“ Yes, I fear God and the devil ” (a common saying among them).

“ Do you not fear me? ”

“ No.”

"But I could have your head cut off."

"Yes, I know you could; but you wouldn't treat a guest thus."

"No," he said, "I wouldn't, but I would Khy-khwan (turning to him), if he were not such an old friend of mine, for bringing you down here with him."

Then, calling one of my neglectful attendants, he told him to return with me to the house, have bread made for me, and see that I was never hungry, "and don't let him go out alone," he bawled out as we departed.

I passed a few hours quietly with my companion, reading and writing in my diary (afterward I was strictly forbidden to write), when we were told that Johar was coming. Soon he arrived and a crowd with him. The large hall was filled with men, and I was called in to him. He asked me a few things about our country and religion, and I answered him. Then he said he wanted to see God's Book. So I got up and went and got a large Arabic Bible, bound in Morocco, with gilt ornamentation. I had brought this book for him but did not want to force it on him. We uncovered it, and he took it, kissed it and examined it from outside, and concluded it was a nice book. Then he opened it, put on some ancient spectacles, and commenced to read. Opening at Genesis he read a part of chapter xxiv., shut up the book, and asked me to give it to him. "You must buy it," I said; "it is

worth an English pound, I will sell it you for half." He said, "Leave it till to-morrow." Then he said, "Christian, I want to speak to you." I said, "Good, speak on." Said he, "You are come into the land of the Moslem, the believers in Mohammed, the prophet of God ; here are no Christians, we don't allow them to stay here, we are taught by our religion to kill all such. I must ask you to give up your religion and become as one of us. What do you answer? "

Here was a strait place to be in. I remembered that to displease Johar might cause serious times for me, also, that 750 miles of desert lay between me and any Christian, and I could tell that the whole thing had been arranged.

Johar went on to say, "I praise God that through my influence six Christians that came here at different times have become Moslem, and one Jew also. There is a man living here in Jowf that was formerly a Christian, but has resigned himself to God and the true religion. (This latter was true for I met the man oftentimes after, although he was ashamed to speak to me.) Repeat the witness, 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet,' and at once you will become one of the faithful, and be acceptable to God and His people." They were all waiting my answer. With a short silent prayer to God for words to speak, I replied, "Chief Johar, I would ask you two questions and hear your answers." "Good," he said, "speak." "First, if you were in the land

of the Christians, guest with the Queen (I did not know she was dead), and she asked you to become a Christian and give up your own religion, would you do it?" "No, not if she had my head cut off," he replied. "Secondly, which do you think it best to do, to please God or please man?" "To please God," was the ready reply he gave. Then I said, "Johar, I am just like you; I cannot change my religion, not if you cut off two heads, if I had them, and I must please God by remaining a Christian. If I repeated 'the witness,' you would all be pleased, but it would only be from here, (touching my lips) my heart would still remain Christian, and so by pleasing you I should grieve God by becoming a liar and deceiver. I cannot do what you ask me, it is impossible." He rose and went out much displeased. I was glad to get away to my room. Here was an attack on the soul, not the body, and the verse in my Psalm came home forcibly to me: "He shall preserve thy soul." The men came to me frequently that evening and told me how foolish I had been not to do as Johar had asked me.

"To-morrow is our great feast day, and your conversion would have made it a great time of rejoicing," they said.

I was glad when night came so as to be alone, and I prayed earnestly for guidance and help for the coming day, then lay down on the stones to sleep, body and mind not in the most perfect state of rest. Next morning, just after daybreak, I was aroused

by two men fully armed pushing open the door, coming in and shouting, "Christian, get up; Johar has sent us for you, come quickly to the castle." "What does he want?" I asked, "and where is your authority?" "We don't know, here are our swords showing we are on duty."

I quickly dressed, all the time wondering what was going to happen, for I had made up my mind to keep quiet and not expose myself, because the people would be so excited keeping feast, and my presence might have excited them more and caused me harm. I followed the men over to the castle and saw crowds of people going towards it from all directions. On reaching the same spot as I did before I saw Johar mounted on his elevated seat, clad in garments of all colours. He was all smiles and greeted me heartily. I gave him the usual salutations and the special ones customary on high days and festal occasions. He was pleased, but surprised that I could do this. He bade me sit by him. There were hundreds of men and boys sitting in the sun on the sand in front of him.

Said he: "To-day is a great feast with us, and we have been to the old castle and had prayers and service; why did you not come and 'furrage' (to quiz in a curious way) us at our prayers and see all that we did." I replied, "We do not think that people should go to prayers just for the sake of quizzing what others do, prayers to us are sacred and we like to be quiet and alone, and I thought you

would not like me to come and watch you." The answer pleased him and he patted me on the back, saying, "You are better people than we are, if only you would accept the Prophet as we do." Then he told his servants to bring out the things prepared for breaking their fast.

The great castle door with its iron plates on it were opened, and inside I saw a rusty old cannon. In a few minutes several men appeared carrying on a carpet a circular dish about four feet in diameter filled with meat, and "temmin," (a cereal inferior to rice) strongly flavoured with curry and cayenne, and soaked in liquid grease. This was placed in front of Johar and myself. Nine other dishes followed and were placed round in a circle. Then Johar told me to sit down on the sand, as he already had done, which I did. He called Khy-khwan and one or two others. Then saying in a loud voice, "Bismillah!" (In the name of God) he told all to eat, and the men began to feast. The meat—camel's flesh—was in large lumps, but was soon torn into fragments and devoured. The quantity consumed by one man was astonishing. Johar was very attentive to me, and kept putting into my hand lumps of meat, and especially fat, the daintiest part, that he had pulled off the lump in the midst of the bowl. "Eat, Christian, enjoy yourself, don't be ashamed," he said. The sight was sufficient, but I had to eat. I was glad when Johar got up and went back to his seat. I quickly followed. We watched the crowd



A Social Meal.

pushing and grabbing to get their share of the provision. I shall never forget that sight. How I wished I could have taken some pictures of it, but it was impossible. Said Johar, "See the savages, like dogs; do you thus in your land, Christian?" I said "No," and he laughed.

After the dishes had been emptied and well cleaned, they were taken back into the castle and the assembly broke up. Johar called one of my attendants and told him to go back with me to my room and stay with me lest anyone should harm me. So we went back. I learned that three camels and four loads of temmin had been cooked at Johar's expense for the feast. He did this every year. We stayed indoors for an hour or so and then I said I would like to go into the palm groves and gardens and spend a time. The people all being taken up in visiting one another to exchange greetings had no thought for me, so I slipped away alone, and in the quiet time made use of my camera. Late in the afternoon Johar came again. I was out in the groves when a man came to call me. I hurried back and found the large guest-room full of men. I was invited to sit by Johar. All were very silent. Then Johar addressed me. "Christian, what I asked you yesterday was a hard thing, and I think there must be things that make it difficult for you to become a Moslem, but I will help you. Are you married?"

"Yes."

"Have children?"

"Yes, three."

"Have you money?"

"No."

"Do you trade, or keep a shop?"

"No. God sends me what I need."

"Well, listen: If you will become Moslem I will give you four wives instead of the one you have, and you will soon have more than three children. I will also give you camels, palms, and money, so that you can trade and soon become rich. We will give you a house and all you need if you will become a Moslem like we are."

I thanked him for his kind offer, but told him I could not change my religion for all he might offer to give me.

He got up quickly and went away to his castle, murmuring "that it was a cursed day when I came among them, and that if I stayed in the Jowf some harm would befall them."

That evening he sent Faleh, his son, to me, requesting that I give him the Bible he had seen. So I sent it to him.

Next morning early two men came to me with this message, "Johar has sent us to tell you that you must leave the Jowf at once; you must not stay here; you will do some harm if you remain."

My answer was, "Respects to Johar. Tell him I can't leave the Jowf alone; I have no one to go with. When Khy-khwan returns I will go with

him ; I have paid him for the return, so cannot go with anyone else." They went off and told him, and soon returned, saying, "Johar says you must leave at once ; you cannot stay here." I said, "You go and tell Johar if he wants me to leave this place at once he must send a camel and some men that will go with me to Ithera, where I came from. If he won't do that, I must wait till our party returns." Soon they were back again with this message, "Johar says you may stay, but must not leave your room. If the Sultan at the capital hears you have been here doing as you like he might punish Johar for allowing you to remain." This was a relief to me, but I felt I must be careful.

That evening, as I sat by the fire in the guest-room with about 20 men, the head man of the community, a sort of priest and a fanatic, came in and launched into a sermon full of hatred against the Christian religion. He repeated all that the Koran had to say against Christians, and reminded the listeners that the words of their prophet commanded the faithful to exterminate the unbelievers (Christians) whenever they came across them. The whole thing was directed against me, but I took no notice of it. The preacher went away, and I went to my dark corner and prayed for help and guidance.

Early next morning kind-hearted Faleh came to me and said, "Don't fear Abou Jerius (my name among the Arabs, meaning "Father of George," name of my eldest son), no harm shall come to you if

I can help it. Don't make the people angry; some like you, but some that are ignorant hate you." That day, as on previous ones, I sold and distributed many Scriptures to both men and boys, all having proved to me that they could read. In the afternoon Faleh came to me with three men that he said were from Hayil, the capital. They were just starting back, but each wanted a Bible to take with them. Would I give them one each. I was glad of this opportunity of getting the Word taken on to Hayil, especially as I could not reach it myself, so, bringing out three nicely bound copies, I gave them to the men, and they left me and started for the seat of government in Central Arabia. Some day we may hear what was done or caused by these three books taken into this stronghold of Islam.

That afternoon late, I was alone in my room, when a most unfortunate affair happened that nearly cost me my life, and that more than ever set the majority of the Arabs in the Jowf against the Christian. These events must occupy the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

The Climax at the Jowf and Return to Jerusalem

I HAVE already stated that Johar, the Chief of the Jowf, resided in a castle a little distance off the Jowf at the South end. This castle made of mud, bricks, and stones, has three walls and on each corner of the outside wall rose a lofty tower about forty feet high. The apartments of Johar were in the centre of these walls. These towers were for the purpose of defence.

The morning of the day I am writing about there had been rain and a strong wind blowing from the East. The rain had thoroughly soaked the exposed side of one of the towers, and, being only mud brick, had softened it to such an extent that it fell. Unfortunately it fell in and not out, and to make matters worse, crushed the apartment in which Johar was sitting reading the Koran, and the much revered and feared Governor of the Jowf was buried under the accumulation of rubbish.

Sitting alone in my room I heard shrieking and shouting outside. I went to the outer gate and saw

men and boys running towards the castle, and I wondered what had happened to cause such excitement in the Jowf. I soon learned what had happened, but thought best to stay where I was. Johar was after a time rescued, dragged out from the debris, and it was soon found that a leg was broken, and that he was cut and bruised badly. As he lay on the sand of the courtyard of his castle someone remarked, "This is the Christian's doing; he must have been out and looked at the tower and affected it so that it has fallen; it is the beginning of evil." This was like a spark to a keg of gunpowder. It was quickly agreed to be my doing and the cry was raised "Let us kill the Christian." As I stood at the gate of the court I saw the crowd come round the corner, and heard the yell "Kill him, kill him, the Christian, the Christian!" They had clubs and daggers, and some revolvers. On they came nearer and nearer. I did not run away; to have done so might have meant death, and would have appeared as if I had done something. When they got within about eighty yards of me Providence interposed. Three men came from behind and ranged themselves in front of me, crying out with their revolvers in their hands, "Not one of you come near this Christian." The crowd stopped, and I was slowly backed into my room, the three men remaining at the door. The crowd soon melted away and my deliverers came in to me. I thanked them for their kind and ready help and asked what

led them to act as they did. Their answer was a good one. "We have been to India and have seen Christians there, and know that they work harm to no man; we have also seen the effect of the English rule in that land and in Egypt, and we will always help Christians when we can; we wish the English would come here; Christians are better than Moslems. These people of the Jowf are ignorant of the ways of Christians and would have killed you if we had not come along and defended you." Then my host and kind friend Faleh came, broken down and crying because of the accident to his father. He said "Don't fear, Aboo Jerius, I know this is not your doing, it was decreed, and had to happen; I hope my father won't die." Then in came the other two sons and sat with me and I did my best to comfort them. Next day I kept in or near the house. Faleh said it would be better. My old Chief, Khy-khwan, was missing. I had not seen him for two days and wondered what had come of him. Toward evening a man came to me saying, "Khy-khwan has sent me to bring you to him, he is in a house at the other end of the town," so believing him I got up and followed him. It was quite half an hour's walk to the house I was taken to, but no Khy-khwan was there. I asked for him and was told he would come at sunset.

But the sun set and he did not come. I said I would return to my room, as by the actions and bearing of the men about me I suspected mischief.

Some dates were brought and I was told to eat. We will have supper later on, they told me. I ate a few dates and made as though I would return, but it was dark and the men would not let me go. I insisted on going to Khy-khwan or him coming to me, but was made to sit down again. About ten a dish of food was brought in and put before me and I was told to eat. I do not know what it was. I tasted it but did not like it, so refused to eat any more, and as none of the others were asked to eat I suspected it was poisoned. At last it was carried out untouched, and they asked if I would sleep. I said "No." I guessed they meant mischief, and had enticed me away there by saying my travelling chief wanted me. All that night I sat up. Many times they begged me to lie down and sleep but I refused. At last the morning came, and as I was preparing to leave these men, I was glad to see appear at the door the best disposed of my three attendants. He said, "I only missed you this morning and set out to find you; you must not go off alone like this." When I got back there was Khy-khwan sitting at the fire. He said he had never sent for me, so it was a trap to get me alone and do me harm, but it failed. We had been now eight days in the Jowf and I had disposed of a number of Scriptures. One morning, on opening the door of my room, I found most of them piled up in a heap, having been returned during the night. I put them inside,

knowing that if I kept quiet I should find out why they had been brought back. Soon Faleh came to me saying, "You must not be angry at the books being returned, my father gave orders that the people must return them; he says there is something bad in them." I asked him what it was. He told me it was in the 2nd Psalm, verse 7, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." I said, "Many others will be glad to have these books, but why has not your father sent back his book?" "He wants to keep and read it," was the answer I was glad to hear. That day Khy-khwan told me we must leave soon. "I wanted to stay a month, but for your sake we must get away soon," he said. Next day the people came back and asked for their books. I reminded them of what Johar had said. Their answer was, "We have done as we were told and returned the books, we were not ordered not to take them a second time. Give them back to us and we will hide them until you are gone away." So I gave them the books again and heard no more of them. That afternoon I went to the castle to say good-bye to Johar as we were to leave early next day. I was kept at the castle door whilst word was given him I was there. I was allowed inside and saw the old man lying on a bed in one corner of a large room.

Many men were sitting with him. I was not permitted to go near him, so from the doorway said, "I am journeying to-morrow and came to say

farewell ; thank you for your kindness, may God grant you peace and soon restore you and your leg." Then a hand was put on my arm and I was led away outside the castle. Thus ended my intercourse with Johar, aboo Amber, the much respected and feared Chief over the town and district of Jowf. I have heard no more of him from that time up to the present. Maybe some time in the future I shall return to those parts ; past experiences encourages me to do so, believing that on a second visit I should fare better. That night I had gone to rest and was asleep when I was aroused by men shouting outside the door. I got up and on opening the door found two men, and by the light of a tiny lamp they had I saw that between them they were bearing something in a sack. They pushed their way in and deposited their burden on the floor, saying, " Faleh has sent you these dates to eat on the journey. He may not see you in the morning, so he sends 'salaams' (respects) and wishes you a safe journey." They emptied the dates, about two bushels, into my largest saddlebags, and then produced a good-sized skin of dates, saying, " These are from Faleh also, they are for your wife and children in Jerusalem, you must carry them to them with many 'salaams.' "

Next morning I was up early and saw that preparations were being made for a start, but ere we set out my companion, Khy-khwan and myself had six invitations to breakfast, which we accepted, eating a

little at each house. On returning to our lodging the camels were at the door ready loaded. Faleh was on hand, and with him a bag of warm bread which he gave me, saying, "It will serve you a few days, and help you over the desert."

Farewells were exchanged, and with mingled feelings of joy and regret we rode off. Faleh was very kind to me all the thirteen days I was there. Every morning about ten o'clock he would come or send for me and take me on to the roof, three stories up, and give me a good breakfast of bread, date syrup, native butter and milk. This was the best fare the Jowf could produce. "Eat and enjoy it; we don't give such to ordinary guests, you are my friend, hence bread," was always his set speech. He would sit and eat with me, not being afraid to put his hand in the same dish as the Christian. He told me he had been twice to Mecca, and I observed he was most careful to remember the times of prayer.

Arriving at the North extremity of the town the caravan was waiting for us. Khy-khwan got down, kissed the men all round, and then gave the word to start. With ejaculations to Allah (God), Abraham and Mohammed to prosper and protect them they said farewell to the Jowf and its fertile gardens and shady palm groves. For four days we journeyed on over the sand without finding water. We had expected to find surface water but were disappointed. Two hours after sunset on the fourth day water was found in a large basin in some rocks that we had

come amongst. It was dirty and strong, caused by camels having bathed and stood in it during the day, and ere we could fill our skins our camels pushed their way in stirring up the sediment and adding to the filth. We were thankful for the find and drank freely, also using it for making bread.

The next day whilst on the move my camel dropped down under me and refused to get up again. I called some of the men, and they, seeing tears streaming from the beast's eyes, informed me, "Your camel is drunk, cannot walk because it is giddy." It had been eating some herb that had made it so. They called for water, damped some grass and tied it on the beast's head, then set about making a syrup of some dates, mixing in salt and flour. Having prepared this draught, the camel's mouth was held open and the mixture poured down its throat. In about half-an-hour the tears ceased flowing, and the now sober beast got up and went on with the others. That night we found a pool of water, worse than the other, and camped not far from it. Next day we had a fright by seeing a man in the distance coming towards us. Some of our men went off to meet him not knowing if he were the scout of friend or foe. They brought the poor fellow in with them. He could not speak. He signed for a drink which was given him. Then he told us that he was one of nine that had started out over the desert with their camels, well provided with food and water, but they had been met by robbers

who had taken everything from them, and for eight days they had been without food or drink. His companions were lying helpless on the sand some distance off. They had seen us in the distance and he being the strongest had come after us. A skin of water, some flour and dates were given him and we left him rejoicing in his good luck.

That evening as we were camped in a valley, very full of brushwood and stones, we had another alarm which happily ended peaceably. The men were seated round the fires when the word was passed round that voices had been heard coming up the valley. All were silent, and sure enough on the still night we could distinctly hear the sound of men talking. Those of our party that had arms got ready for an attack. The fires were quickly doused by sand being thrown over them. We were ready for whatever might come. As no one came down on us our men went out to find out who was about. Soon we heard the report of the guns and guessed that the sound of voices had come from enemies. But following the firing of the guns came the welcome shout. "Friends! friends!" In about ten minutes our men returned bringing with them twelve of the wildest looking fellows it was possible to come across.

One look at them was sufficient to tell that they had suffered privation and fatigue. The fires were relighted and conversation began again. Coffee was given the new comers, then they told their story,

which in brief was as follows: They had set out from the Jowf two weeks before, intending to get to Damascus and find work. They had no camels, but sufficient food to last if all went well, and skins to carry water if they found it, as they supposed they would. The skins they had with them were hard and cracked, proving their long fast from drink.

Not knowing the way any too well they got off the track and were lost in the desert. Food and drink were finished. For five days they had been wandering about hungry, thirsty, and weary. That day they came across the footprints of our camels and men, had followed them, and so overtaken us as we were camped. Bread was made for them, and whilst baking I took them a good lump of my dates, for which they were grateful. Next morning they journeyed on with us, and the next day, the noon of the tenth since leaving Jowf, we saw in the distance the palms of Ithra once again. We had been absent thirty-three days, instead of thirty-five, as Khy-khwan had said we should. On arrival at Ithra the first thing I noticed was the absence of the tent that sheltered the diseased man. I suppose he had died and the tent had been removed. After a few hours rest Khy-khwan, who had faithfully completed the contract made for the four gold pieces, came to me and leading me a little distance away from the guest-room, showed me a small hut built of mud brick with door about three feet high and two wide, and told me it was to be my lodging

place as long as I stayed at Ithera. I told him I should like to get away as soon as I could. I had been away from my home and friends over two months and no news had been exchanged between us. There was no opportunity. I went into the hut, it was very dirty and dusty. Lying about were old earthen jars and a few rough wooden boxes. These had some old dates in, and I was told I could eat all I wanted. The dust on the floor was inches deep. I carried my two saddle bags up there and sat down. Evening came and I was given a bowl of water and a little bread. No light was brought, so I went in search of Khy-khwan and asked him for a lamp, and something to lie on and cover myself with. These were refused me and I was told to return to my place. I did so, and being weary I lay down in the dust, put a large mud brick for a pillow, and tried to sleep. But I soon found I was not alone, creepers were in abundance. I felt them on my face and hands, got up and struck one of my precious matches, and revealed a variety of creeping things, including scorpions and lizards. The situation was not inviting, and I could only keep on the move all that night and wait for the morning. At last it came, and I sought out Khy-khwan and told him he must send me on my way home. I would not stay in the hut he had consigned me to. He said he was going my way in three or four days, and we would journey together. He took me to his house and told his wife she was to

give me breakfast. I then went among the men of the place, asking if any of them would go with me to Orman, a six days' journey. They all had one answer, "Give three English pounds a day, and we will convey you to Orman." I soon found that a price had been fixed for me to pay to anyone that I could arrange with. Almost every day of the eleven I was detained by the immovability of the people I saw companies of men leave for the districts N. and W. If they had been able to provide me a camel to ride I might have gone with them, but they were walking. I made friends with one man, who, I think, pitied me. He would go with me into the palm-groves and tell me all about the treatment of the palm. I learned some interesting things, helping me to understand Psalm xcii, 12, in much of its teaching. The palm is useful, beautiful, fruitful when joined to another, grows from inside and not from the exterior, rejoices the heart of man, and other things, all possible to the righteous. The same man took me out and showed me how the Arabs there, as well as at Kaf, procured the salt they sold to the caravans. In the sand were many springs of strong brine. This was ladled up and poured into beds on the sand, and allowed to remain until nearly all the moisture had evaporated. Then a man with a basket and a board waded into the deposit and scraped up the snow-white crystals. These were put up in heaps to dry, and then carried to the village and stored in bins of mud brick to

await buyers. The money value of a camel load of salt was about 1s. 3d.

During three days of my enforced stay there I had fever, but no one cared. The nights were the worse part of the time. I could hear the creepers moving about overhead and around me, and one morning saw in the dust distinct traces of a snake that had passed by me. I felt that I was a prisoner and that the story of my Chief going my way was all false. He hoped the delay would have made me offer money, but I had none to offer, for all had been taken from me, as well as my shoes, kettle, soap, comb, towel, under-clothes, and many other things all useful to me.

One morning I saw a man come in that I had seen in Kaf. I went to him, and he told me what I had heard the third day of my arrival, viz., that the Chief of Kaf was away. Had he been at home I would have walked over to Kaf and thrown myself on his mercy. At last I made up mind to tackle Khykhwan in earnest. It was the morning of the eleventh day. I found him and said, "If you don't send me away to-day I will start out into the desert alone, and if I die my blood will be upon you."

He began to excuse himself but I kept at him. At last he said, "Well, I will send you away; and may you never return again." He called a man and told him to go and bring a beast for me. In about an hour a poor skinny donkey was brought that could hardly carry my now almost empty saddle-bags.

I asked for a camel so that I might ride but was told I must walk. So minus breakfast and farewells I set off with this unknown man. He had been told that he was to leave me with the first lot of Arabs he came across.

Walking through heavy sand under a hot sun was hard work, and after two hours I gave in and sank down on the sand exhausted. The man was a little ahead with the donkey; I called to him and he stopped, took the bags off the donkey and turned all the contents on to the sand. He handled the boxes of exposed plates, and their weight made him think it was money. With his dagger he ripped open two boxes and emptied two dozen plates out on the sand not knowing what to make of such things. He appropriated my last pair of socks, some papers and a jar of Leibig, thinking it was ointment. An empty soup tin I had kept to boil a drop of water in he took. Having buried these things in the sand he came back to me and told me to get up and follow or he should go and leave me; I rose and hobbled after him keeping it up for two hours although in agony from aching limbs and thirst. At last we saw in the distance a palm, and, pitched near it, an Arab house. Never was a sight more welcome, or a shelter so acceptable. The owner of the tent came out to me and carried in the bags, then helped me in and gave me a corner in the tent. The children, nearly naked, and his four wives, sat down near me and watched me, giving vent to expressions of pity



Woman Churning Butter.

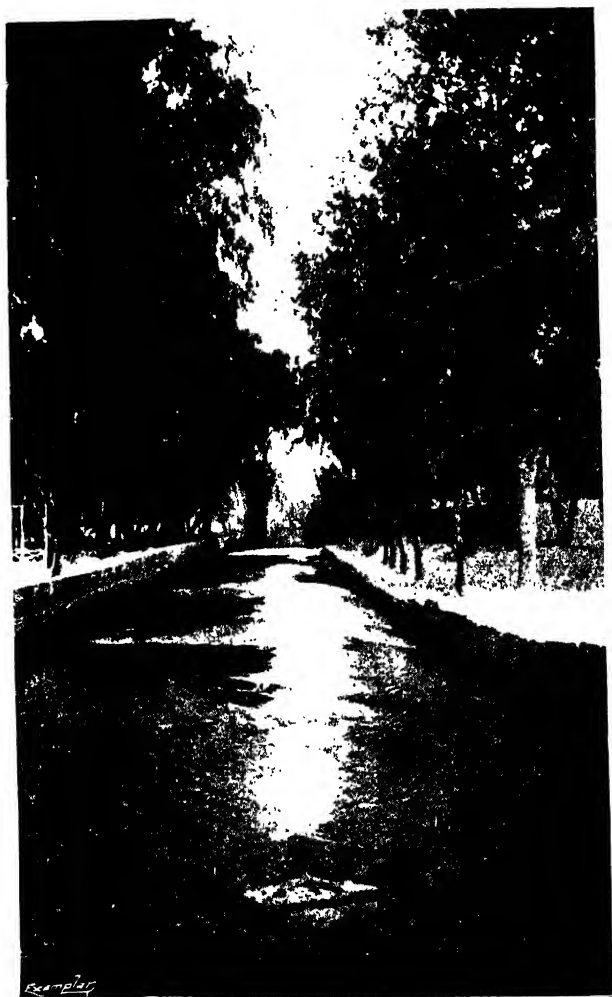
for me and curses and oaths for those who had thus treated me. Some dates were given me to eat and some dirty butter to help them down. I stayed five days with these simple people of the desert and they showed me no small kindness.

On the fifth day a party of men with camels came to the tent. They were on their way to Damascus. I had hoped to be able to go due West and so reach Jerusalem, but it was impossible. So after much bickering with the leader of the party, composed of twelve camels and eighteen men, he consented to take me on to Orman on payment of half-a-sovereign. But I had no money and he insisted on payment beforehand. I told him I had money at Orman, and at last he said he would let me ride on the top of one of the loads ; so I set off on another stage of my homeward journey. All went well for the first two days, the men were a decent lot and kindly disposed. On the third morning I got up ready for an early start as usual, but was told that six of the camels had strayed away during the night and some of the men had gone off to look for them. We wasted that day staying where we were, but no trace of the camels could be found, so the six loads of salt, twelve sacks, was emptied out on the sand, the sacks buried, and it was settled to start about midnight. The next two days passed and I asked when we should reach Orman, the answer was, " We are not going to Orman ; I killed a man there once and I am afraid to enter the place. We will leave you at a

village named Umm-Rowman, about two hours away from Orman." I was sorry to hear this, as it meant going among strangers again, and having to arrange to get to Orman, and being moneyless it was hard to do.

On the afternoon of the sixth day we came to the hamlet of Umm-Rowman, the inhabitants being Mohammedans, Druzes, and a few Catholics. I was lodged with a man known to the one that had come with me, and he made arrangements for me to be taken to Orman, and for the man that took me to bring back the money in payment for my journey. Next day I was taken to Orman, and had a hearty welcome from the people I had left many weeks before. It was most encouraging to me to hear them say, "We have never let a day pass without asking God to keep you and bring you back to us safe and well." Of course I had to tell them what had taken place and all that had occurred on my journeys. The man I had left my money with gave it back to me as I had given it to him.

I stayed a few days with these kind people, and was beseiged for Scriptures, but I was sold out. Then, mounted on a donkey, in company with one man, I left for Damascus. The night before I left a soldier came to the guest-room asking for the Christian that had returned from the Jowf. The official at Sulkhud (the castle and town I had passed in the fog) had heard of me, and wanted to see me, and I was to take him a Bible, if I had one. So next



View on the River Abana, Damascus.

morning I went over to him. He was very civil; told me I had done a bold and dangerous thing, and he would have stopped me had he known about me earlier. I did not enlighten him as to how I passed him three months before. He was glad of the Bible, and told me he wanted to read it. Five days later I looked down on Damascus, the earthly paradise of the Arab, and soon after was lodged in the home of one of my native friends there. A hearty welcome was given me by my kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Richards, at the British Consulate. They were much relieved at my turning up after so long an absence. From there I sent word of my safe return to my family and friends, who, by this time, were getting anxious as to my safety. Having rested a few days, I set off again (this time under better circumstances) for my home in Jerusalem, and, after nine days riding, at last looked down on the Holy City once more, just three and a half months from the time that I had left it. The first move toward Arabia from the North was over; fifteen hundred miles had been traversed during the journey; about two hundred and fifty Arabic Scriptures were sold or distributed among these hitherto neglected people; hundreds of leaflets and booklets given away, all bearing on the plan of salvation; and it is not saying too much to say that many hundreds heard by the spoken Word that without faith in Jesus the Son of God there could be no forgiveness of sin or eternal life. Looking back on these accomplishments we

ask, "What will the harvest be?" and, looking on, wonder how long must elapse ere—

Arabia's desert ranger
To Him will bend the knee.

and "the kings (chiefs) of Sheba and Seba offer gifts, and fall down before and serve Him." (Ps. lxxii. 10, 11.) If the perusal of these pages will lead the reader to take an interest in the inhabitants of Kedar, and give themselves to obey the command of Matthew ix. 38, the fatigue, hardships, and dangers of my journeyings will be amply repaid.

Let all be in the spirit of expectation for the fulfilment of Psalm lxxii. 9, when "The dwellers in the desert shall bow before Him."

CHAPTER IX

Dangers and Deliverances.

IT is not given to every missionary to undergo hardships, dangers and trials. Some, during long years of patient breaking up of new ground, or seed sowing, have to endure things that the reaper has no experience of. The dangers and trials endured by Mackay, of Uganda, or John Paton, in the South Sea Islands, were followed by remarkable times of reaping by those that came after them. The workers at Kerak in Moab, are not called upon to endure the hardships or humiliations of those who started that mission in face of danger, fatigue, and privation. How true the Scriptures respecting work of to-day and many of the workers, "One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour, other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." Happy those who so labour "that both he that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together." Unfortunately, sometimes the reaper forgets the long years of weary breaking up and sowing before he went in to gather in the sheaves. "Render therefore to all their dues;

honour to whom honour is due," and praise to whom praise. The life of any pioneer, whether missionary or otherwise, must of necessity be one full of danger, trial, and fatigue. The difference between the two classes is this, that the explorer, scientist, or hunter generally goes relying on his firearms, or foregained knowledge of the people or land to carry him through, whilst the missionary should, if he does not, rely solely on God for protection and guidance under all circumstances. A man in the possession of firearms will be sorely tempted to put his trust in them when danger comes, and so weaken his faith in God, and to spill blood among the Arabs would mean lifelong enmity, and perpetual absence from the country and people where such a thing had happened.

This chapter is not written to create sympathy or pity, but that the reader may know that there is a God that can, and will, deliver, and also that a missionary's life is not all honey. The first marked deliverance I had after I reached Moab strengthened my faith in the living God. As I was attending the patients gathered about my door one morning, a big burly fellow, son of one of the Shiekhs, came up, and, pushing his way through the crowd, laid claim to my medicine chest. To him it was useless, but he thought to me most valuable, because without it I could not doctor the people, and so my allowances from the Queen of England would cease and I would suffer loss. He refused to give up the chest unless I gave him money. He not only claimed the chest,

but entered the house and sat himself on the ground, saying, "Here I stay until I get the money." He sat some hours, although many attempts were made to persuade him to go away. But he was immovable. I noticed that the key of the door was in the lock on the outside, so rising and going toward the door I jumped up the four steps, pulled the door to behind me, turned the lock, and had my unwelcome visitor prisoner. He began to shout and kick the door, asking that it be opened, but I went away and left him inside. Up into the city I went, and came upon my prisoner's father, and other of our Chiefs and their sons, sitting in a circle in the sun. I went into the midst of them and told them what had happened, and how I had Abdullah prisoner. They laughed, but were angry, told me to go and release him, and they would tell him not to trouble me again. I requested that two or three of them should go with me and bring him away, so jumping up three called me to follow them. I gave one of them the key, and told him to unlock the door, which he did, and out came the prisoner with a bound, not to meet me, as he expected, but into the arms of his fellow-Chiefs. He cursed and raved, and swore by the life of God and Mohammed that next time he met me out he would kill me. Thinking it likely he had taken something from my room whilst locked in, I asked that he be searched. They felt his garments, but found nothing, but I noticed that one of his arms did not move freely, so got hold

of it and lifted it up before he knew what I was up to. From under his cloak fell my small clock; he had secreted it in his armpit, thinking no one would notice it. At last he was taken away, and I was left alone with his threats in my ear. I saw nothing more of him for three weeks, although hearing from one and another of his purpose to harm me.

One morning I was riding out to an encampment to attend a wounded man. I was alone. Coming toward me over the plain, I saw in the distance a horseman. Soon he commenced to canter, then came on at full gallop. As he came nearer I saw it was my prisoner of three weeks before. He was armed with his long spear, and as he rode up to me, pulled from his side a revolver, and levelled it at me, laughing and saying, "God has given me my opportunity, now I will kill you and throw your body into a pit, and no one will know where you are or what has come of you." I replied, "If no one else knows God will, and He will punish you." At once he dropped the arm holding the deadly weapon and said, "I never met a man like you; had you been one of our own people you would even now be dead. Why are you not afraid?" "I trust God to protect me from evil" I replied, "and that is why you could do nothing." "No," he said, "when you said God will know, all the power went from me." He then asked me where I was going, and on being told said he would return with me and see that no harm came to me. So he did, and next

morning returned with me to my home, and from that time we were fast friends, I oftentimes appealing to him for help in time of difficulty or need. Some months later I had a different experience, this time at night. I had been to attend the Chief of a village about six hours ride away. I found he had been badly shot and cut about by some of the young Chiefs of Kerak, because of a quarrel over some sheep some time before. By careful attention to the wounded man, I was able, after about eight days stay, to return to my home in Kerak. There were two ways to the place I had gone to, one very lonely, leading through large boulders of rock that had fallen down from the sides of the valley. I had been taken this route but returned alone another way.

On arriving at my room, I was asked by my fellow-worker, a young woman who lived in the next house, if I had been molested in the way. I replied, "No, why?" I was told that the three men that had tried to kill the Chief I had been attending were hiding between the rocks in the way, with the intention of shooting me on my return. They were very angry because I had helped restore the wounded man to health, hence their action, but as I had taken the other road home I had escaped them. That night I had gone to bed and was asleep in my room all alone. About midnight I was roused by a banging at the door. I called to know what was wanted, because it was so

unusual to be disturbed in this way. The answer was, "Open the door or we will break it in, quick." "Who are you, and what do you want?" I asked from inside, but I only got the same reply as before. I got up, lit the lamp, put on some clothes, and went and opened the door. Without any formalities in walked three men, their faces covered with handkerchiefs, with only their eyes visible. They shut the door behind them and said to me, "We are come to kill you." I walked up to them one at a time, pulled the covering off their faces and recognised them, saying, "You are Bedr, you Mc-mood, and you Salamey," three of the cruellest and most bloodthirsty of our tribe. They were rather surprised at my action and that I knew them. I asked them to sit down, stirred up the ashes on the hearth in the middle of the floor and soon had a fire going. Whilst I was doing this and making some tea I had an eye to them. They had daggers and revolvers with them, the latter fully charged as they soon showed me. They made me sit down with them and answer questions. "Why do you go to our enemies?" "Where was the man wounded?" "How did you treat him?" "Will he recover?" and such like, all of which I answered. Then they went on to tell me why they had tried to kill the man, how they had waylaid him and shot him, and how angry they were when they were told I had gone to doctor him. They said they had been waiting five days for me to

return, and had intended shooting me from behind the rocks. Hearing I had returned they came to the city and without anyone knowing had come to me in the night with the intention of murdering me. "In the morning you will be found dead here, we shall be away from the city before then and no one will know who killed you," they said. I told them I was not afraid of being killed, but if no one was near to see them, God would know all about it as He knew everything. They showed me their daggers and pistols, and I told them to be quick or to go and leave me. They were slow to act and talked among themselves in an undertone. At last they said, "If you will give us each ten mejedies (about £2), we will do you no harm." I soon told them I should do nothing of the kind. They lowered the amount, and finding I still refused they began to threaten. I kept firm, and again they held a conference, the result of which was a demand to be shown the pictures (the magic lantern.) They had heard about it and must have a show to themselves. I told them of the trouble to fix up the sheet, &c., but they insisted, so I had to get it out, put up the sheet, and give them an exhibition. They were highly pleased with the pictures, all Scripture subjects, and what I had to say about them, working in all the Gospel I could. Having seen about twenty they asked to be shown "the one that boils," meaning the chromotrope. I put it in and set it turning, in and out, out and in, and they

were delighted. One of them, on turning round to see the lantern noticed that the day was breaking and told the other two of it, and they said they must be off or they would be seen leaving and have to give an account of themselves and their being out so early. They asked me to promise them I would never again go to their enemies, but I refused. Then they asked me to give my word that I would not tell anyone of their doings that night, and to please them I promised, and away they went, leaving me to ponder over the night's doings and the wonderful way I had been protected and upheld.

On another occasion, I was sitting with two of our lady workers in the living room after our day's work was over, when all at once without any warning the door burst open and in came a young man named Fellah, the only son of his father a much respected Chiet. This young man was well known for his daring and boldness, and so had taken the liberty to enter a house in which were two single women, and that at night. I met him before he got far in and ordered him to leave, but he only laughed at me and refused. Finding he was obstinate I took him by the back of the neck, and before he knew it I had him not only outside the house, but beyond the outer gate. To be treated thus hurt his dignity and he commenced to shout and threaten all kinds of things that he would do to me. Hearing the noise our landlord's son came over from their room

near by, and tried to pacify the young man, telling him how different our customs were to theirs and such like. But his anger was roused; he hurried to a house near by and came back with a rifle. Placing a loaded cartridge in it, and one in the hand of the landlord's son as a confirmation of what he said, (a custom among them) he swore that he would not sleep or eat until he had killed me. He called on Abraham, Mohammed, and others to witness the oath he had taken. Meanwhile others had come, attracted by the shouting and much talking. I was inside with the ladies not knowing then all that was going on outside. In due time we had prayers and I went out to go over to my own room; the young fellow had taken up his position on my roof, but had not seen me cross over to my room. I went to bed but was kept in mind of his presence on the roof by the constant thump from the butt end of his gun. He kept his watch all night and then day came. The people as they gathered for medicine were much concerned for me when they heard the story. I got up, had my breakfast and much against the wishes of the natives commenced the medical work. The young man on the roof was shouting out threats against me accompanied by awful curses; I bore it as long as I could and then went out, up on to the roof, and straight up to him, "If you want me here I am, do what you wish or else be off away from here," I said to him. He was cowed and said nothing. I insisted on him getting off the roof and

leaving me to my work ; after some hesitation he went down and I followed him, and as he went away he said, " I will give you a bullet when I meet you out alone." Some of the leading men of the city appeased him for the time by a little raw coffee, but he stuck to his determination to harm me, because of his vow and the cartridge he had given as a pledge, and which he would not take back although urged to do so. The next time I saw that young man was under very different and sad circumstances which it may be of interest to relate, thus proving how true the Arab's proverb, " Mountain may never meet mountain, but man may meet man," teaching that it is best on separating to be friends and not foes.

There had been a wedding at an encampment some four hours ride North of Kerak, and all the young Chiefs of the tribe had been called to join in the festivities. As is customary the young men played on their horses, racing and wrestling, the horses seeming to enjoy it as much as the rider. A sham fight was in-process when my troublesome friend of some weeks before galloped his horse across the course of a bullet shot from a rifle, the missile entering the windpipe on one side and coming out on the other. He was carried to a tent, and a horseman despatched for me, the name of the wounded man being kept secret. On arriving at the encampment I was taken to the tent to find it was Fellah that was down and needed attention. His first words, spoken with difficulty, were, " How

could you come to me after the way I served you?" My answer was in their own style, "What's past is past, and what's dead is dead," equivalent to let bygones be bygones. I did my best for him, staying five days and nights. One afternoon he was leaning on my arms, and I was feeding him with some milk, when suddenly he fell back dead on my breast. Great was the consternation among the crowd of sympathisers in that tent; the women screeched and rent their clothes; the immediate relatives falling on the body, hugging and kissing it, whilst the men wrung their hands in agony or cut off their hair as a sign of their great grief.

At once the cry of "Revenge" was raised, the men jumped up, seized their guns, jumped on their horses, and were soon galloping in the direction of the camp in which the young man was, from whose rifle that bullet had come causing the death of the Chief's son. Accidents are not recognized among the Arabs; life had been taken, and the custom requires a life in return. I took the opportunity to ride away on the only horse left, and was first to tell the sad news in the city. Said one man to me that evening, "Fellah swore to give you a bullet, but got one himself; it is the work of God; everyone must eat his fate."

Next morning the body was brought in to be buried, and the sight was one I shall never forget.

To complete this incident I must tell that the supposed murderer saw the armed horsemen coming

towards the camp, guessed what had happened, and claimed the protection of the Chief of the encampment, and so saved his life, although afterwards the penalty of two years' exile and the loss of all his belongings were put upon him, the dead man's relatives getting all the property that had been forfeited as the price of their lost son.

Another narrow escape came about in quite another way, and under very different circumstances. I had been into Jerusalem, and was returning to Kerak, but had to take the route by Hebron and the South end of the Dead Sea, one generally avoided for two reasons, viz., the scarcity of water and the fear of robbers, because the road via Jericho and Medaba was possessed by a tribe of Arabs unfriendly to any from Kerak. I had with me two Arabs, one an old man named Salem, who had travelled much with me and had always proved faithful, and to whom on this occasion I owed my life, not excluding of course an all-seeing Providence.

We were going along the Eastern shore of the Dead Sea, and came to a tiny stream of fresh water, where we determined to camp as the sun was about setting. The place was very stony, and not such a one as we generally choose, preferring, if possible, open ground, so that anyone or anything can be seen approaching, but as there was no water ahead of us we had to stay there or go thirsty. We had our supper and put the nosebags on the horses, but noticed that they did not eat. Old Salem said to



Shores of Dead Sea.

Reynolds

me, "the animals are restless and cannot eat their suppers." Time passed and still our patient steeds remained supperless, but not motionless. With their ears pricked up and their heads well lifted, they were keeping a sharp look-out ahead of them, first in one direction and then in another, turning this way and then another. Their behaviour told my experienced old Arab that somebody besides ourselves was about, and the horses could see them moving about, although it was dark. This was causing their restlessness and abstinence from their suppers. We all made up our minds to sit and watch, but weary with a long day's ride I soon fell asleep under the cover of a great boulder. It was about midnight, and I was lying half awake and half asleep, when almost together, within a few moments of each other, the horses whinnied, and old Salem called to me, "Get up, quick." Up I jumped, and on looking out I saw three men running away as hard as they could go. They had crept up to us under cover of the large stones, no doubt thinking we were all sleeping. But the horse saw the nearest one, and gave Salem the alarm. He saw the nearest man standing over me with a huge stone in his hands that any moment might have been dropped on my head and so have killed me. Jumping up quickly the stone missed me, the men making off on finding that they were discovered.

After this the animals settled down and ate their supper. Old Salem would not sleep however for said

he, "Just before dawn when it is darkest, and the robbers think we are weary with watching, they may return, so we must be prepared for them." Sure enough they came again at the expected time, but a good fire gave warning that we were about, and at dawn we loaded up and went on our way. We never knew who the thieves were, or where they came from or went to. We were thankful for the escape from them, and our steeds had an extra feed for the share they took in warning us of the presence of an enemy. That same morning we met a band of wild fellows that far outnumbered us, and helped themselves to such things as they fancied as they leisurely turned over our belongings, leaving us lighter than they found us, and me with a few bruises from blows of heavy clubs because I objected to their behaviour.

The foregoing dangers and deliverances all have been experienced on dry land, but one yet remains to be told that took place on the water—not the blue ocean of either the Atlantic or Mediterranean, but on the historical salt sea, or, as is better known, Dead Sea. Our recollections, however, lead us to let go the title "Dead," and substitute "Living." It came about in the year 1895, if memory serves me right. I had come in from Kerak to Jerusalem to take back my wife and four months old baby. About that time a good sized sailing boat was going, as wind permitted, between the nearest point to Jericho on the N. and Moab on the East.

By this route the journey to Kerak could be shortened by three days, and was less fatiguing.

We found out the time fixed for the boat to set sail, viz., sunset, and made arrangements accordingly. Our heavy luggage was sent by mules and some Keraky were to meet the boat on the Eastern side and take us up to the city. Our party was made up of two friends going on a visit with us to Kerak, my wife, baby, and myself. We reached the sea shore in good time, saw our few belongings put into the boat, and then we took up our places. The boat was loaded with iron girders and timber for the Government in Kerak. This was good because of the buoyancy of the water. A good breeze blew from the North, and we sailed along merrily. All went well for five hours, the moon rose and we knew we must be nearing our goal. The wind had increased, and we were going at a good speed. Our two boatmen, like real Arabs, were both asleep when they should have been most awake. All of a sudden we stopped, the boat veered over on one side, and the waves, now quite high, came dashing over us, wetting us through and through before we could recover ourselves. Poor baby got a drenching as well as all the others. The sudden stop roused the man at the rudder, and we soon found we had run sideways on a sandbank. So fast were we going along that the boat had cut deeply into the sand and was immovable. It was about 11.15 and moonlight. The men tried to move

the boat by pushing her off, then we got down into the water, which was chest deep and pushed, but all to no purpose. We threw the iron girders into the sea, then the timber, but the boat stuck. Baby was crying for milk, so had to be content with it cold, no spirit stove would remain lit a minute for the wind and water. Meanwhile the boat was getting more and more on one side, so we perched up on the side highest from the water. We guessed we were near the land because reeds were near by. I got down into the water and set out landwards, but soon found that mud was abundant and the water deeper as I neared the reeds, so I returned to the boat to await the daybreak. We shouted ourselves hoarse, hoping to attract the attention of any Arabs that might be near, but it was no use. Then our two boatmen after many attempts and appeals to Abraham and Mohammed for help, said they would swim off and try and get help. So away they went leaving us alone until past daybreak. Then we saw them away on the shore, and they came off to us followed by our kind Arabs that had been waiting for us according to our orders. They had heard the shouting in the night, but thought it was the Arabs near by keeping the wild pigs off the grain and gardens, so had not responded. I made one trip to land, walking through the sea and mud for about 300 yards, then, having an idea of the way, returned to the boat, took the baby and carried him to land, held high up out of the water. He enjoyed the trip

more than I did, and was safely deposited with an Arab on shore whilst I returned to the wreck. My wife and our lady friend had been obliged to take to the water, their skirts making their progress difficult and slow, but with the aid of our willing Arabs at last reached the land and took shelter in the tent that was pitched a short distance away. One or two more returns to the boat brought our belongings to land, all spoilt by the salt water of that "lively sea." The boat remained fast for some time, but at last was set free by the combined strength of the Arabs of the district. Our men had the good sense to have ready for us a large pot of chicken broth, plenty of rice in, and a good kettle of tea, of which we imbibed a good quantity. Clothes were washed in a stream of fresh water near by. Whilst this was in process the ladies were isolated in the tent until their garments had dried sufficiently to be donned. I stalked around in a pair of my friend's trousers whilst my own were drying. Fortunately the place of landing was in the plains and so very warm, or the consequence to our health might have been serious after the night's exposure to wind and waves. We were thankful to have escaped with our lives although we lost nearly everything else. Here, too, "the Angel of the Lord encamped round about us, and delivered." One more instance of God's keeping power must suffice for this part of my writings. Travelling with a company of traders from Kerak to Hebron we fell among thieves and were left much in

the condition of the poor man on his way to Jericho.

We left the shores of the Dead Sea, and slowly made our way up into the hill country of Judea. About eight o'clock a halt was made for breakfast, the animals unloaded, and each sought the shade of some rock. We were sitting eating when twelve men appeared over a hill near by. The word "Robbers" went quickly round, and fear seized everyone. As they got nearer a volley was fired at us, wounding two of our company. This was followed by large stones being thrown down on us. All our men ran away and hid themselves. One man covered my sister with his cloak, and carried her off and hid her in a cave for safety. I picked up my saddle-bags and followed, but was pursued by one of the robbers, shouting, "Drop it, or I shoot." I threw away the bags and got into the cave with my sister. After a time, wanting to know what was going on, I crept out, and saw the robbers fighting with our men over the spoil. One of them, seeing me, came and grabbed my cloak and head gear, leaving me in a large cotton shirt. (I was dressed in native style.) Our night coverings were taken, and some of my sister's clothes. Money was demanded from me, but as I had none I could not meet the demand. One of the robbers saw on my finger my late wife's wedding ring, and determined to have it. Finding he could not easily remove it he applied his dagger, and was about to cut off my

finger when he was observed by the chief of the band, who interposed, saying, "Don't spill the Christian's blood; let him alone," so I was spared that loss. All of the animals were loaded with my companion's belongings in the way of oil, tobacco, and native produce, and the robbers drove them away, taking also our water skins, flour, and animals. I begged a donkey for my sister to ride on, and a sack was left with which she covered herself at night. As for me I had to pass three nights in the open with nothing to cover me, exposed to the dews and cold of the Judean hills. One morning at daybreak I presented myself at the door of a friend's house in Hebron, but my forlorn appearance caused the servant to close the door in my face and refuse me admittance. Perseverance conquered, and at last I was allowed to enter, and was soon made welcome. That same night I went on to Jerusalem, in the clothes of my friend, but, as he was a short man, my extremities were very prominent, and the garments were well fitted as regards tightness. The night after my arrival in the Holy City I was seized with violent pains and fever, caused by the long fatigue and exposure. The American Consul, Hon. Selah Merrill, showed me great kindness at that time, and, by God's goodness, I was raised up again and have been permitted to work a time longer for Him.

CHAPTER X

Religion and Customs of the Arabs.

MANY years of close intercourse with the Arabs, of both town and tent, have given me a fairly good insight into their religious as well as social life. The religion of Islam, embraced by the majority of the Arabs, is one that holds its adherents as in a vice. There is nothing in it that is ennobling or helpful to social or domestic life. On the contrary the followers of Mohammed are under a heavy yoke because of the requirements of their religion. I will try and give the main beliefs of this people to show the reader how earthly and exacting are the things that the Arab has to carry out in order to get the favour of God and Mohammed. But first a short account of the institutor of this religion with its two hundred millions of adherents.

In the 6th Century the Jews and the Christians had their synagogues and churches in Arabia. In that land of freedom the Magians revered and practised the doctrines of Zoroaster, and the Sabians adored their planetary deities. The worship of the sun, moon, and fixed stars was the primitive religion

of the Arabs, and was a system naturally formed and adopted by a people, who in travelling through immense deserts, contemplated and were guided by the regularity of the motions of the heavenly bodies. Of all the various tribes of the Arabians, that of the Koreish held the distinguished rank. To them had been consigned the honourable office of guarding the Caaba, the sacred temple at Mecca, and their supremacy in religious affairs was accompanied with submission to their temporal sway. Of this tribe came one, Abdullah, who married the fair Amina of the noble tribe of the Zarites, and from them came the victorious enthusiast of the East. The dawn of Mohammed's fame was dark with many clouds. The death of his father in early infancy left the future Lord of Arabia the possessor of five camels and one slave. The childhood of Mohammed was soon deprived of maternal care, and he was (so tradition says) put out to nurse with a Bedouin family. He remained in obscurity until about twenty-five, when the office of manager to a wealthy widow, and soon the possession of her hand and fortune, raised him to an equality with any in Mecca. He had always been remarkable for a serious deportment and strict attention to devotional exercises, every year he was wont to retire for a month to a cave for the purposes of fasting, prayer and meditation. Such a life urged him at length to proclaim himself a prophet sent from heaven to preach the unity of the Godhead, and to restore to

its purity the religion of Abraham and Ishmael. Thus was founded the religion of Islam in the year A.D. 609, with "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet," for its simple creed. This sentence repeated in sincerity by any outsider constitutes him "one of the Faithful."

So rapid has been the spread of this religion that there is hardly a land to be found without its adherents, and that in the short space of about 1290 years. The requirements of Islam are many, only a few of the principal ones can be mentioned in this chapter. First and foremost comes

PRAYER.

At the appointed times, viz., daybreck, noon, late afternoon, sunset, and two hours later the Mooatten (inviter), with his face turned towards Mecca, proclaims at the top of his voice from the gallery of the Minaret that the hour of devotion has come. This is the proclamation: "God is great, God is great, God is great, there is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet; come to prayer, Great God, there is no God but God." In the morning he adds "prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep." As soon as the voice of the crier is heard, the devout Moslem prepares for prayer. Ministers of State suspend business; the tradesman gives up his dealings with his customers and converts his shop into a Mosque. In four or five positions the prayers are repeated, these prayers are merely a vain repetition of the first chapter of

the Koran, with petitions added for the prophet and patriarchs, and being interpreted would mean—

“ In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Praise be to God who the two worlds made ;
Thee do we entreat, and Thee do we supplicate ;
Lead us in the way, the straight,
The way of those on whom Thou hast compassion,
Not of those on whom is hate,
Nor those that turn aside.—AMEN.”

PURIFICATION OR ABLUTION.

No religious act is acceptable with God unless the body (not heart) has previously been washed. In the courtyards of all Mosques are to be found cisterns or fountains, to which the faithful resort to prepare themselves for the prayers. The face, arms, and feet have to be well washed, and whilst this operation is in progress the devotee is muttering short ejaculations to the effect that Satan may be removed far from him. The Koran permits the traveller, in place of water, to rub the prescribed parts with sand, and so cleanse himself from all outward defilement. Having no water near oft-times makes a good excuse to omit prayers and go on with some more urgent business ; even in the desert the hour of prayer is faithfully observed.

FASTING.

In the religion of Islam fasts take an important place, but none so important as the Fast of Rumathan, observed in remembrance of the monthly visit of Mohammed to a cave to meditate, pray and

fast, during which period the Koran was revealed to him. Perfect abstinence from every kind of support to the body is observed, from the rising to the setting of the sun. The pious pass the hours in meditation and prayer, the careless grandee sleeps the tedious time away, whilst the industrious mechanic or husbandman, compelled to work, feels the rigour of the fast. Night, minus the light, is turned into day, and *vice versa*. When the fast falls on a month in the summer, with its long days and extreme heat, the abstinence is almost intolerable; men get fretty and cross, and oftentimes are sorely tempted secretly to give way and break the fast. The Feast of Rumathan is the most important time of the year.

PILGRIMAGE.

The feast being past, the pilgrimage to Mecca begins to occupy the mind of the faithful. The men of rank, weakly through ill-health, or tied by business, perform this arduous duty by the sending, and devotions, of a substitute. The desert journey is more acceptable to God as entailing more fatigue, danger, and expense, consequently more meritorious. On arriving at the precincts of the Holy Land (a prescribed circle around Mecca) the pilgrim must make an entire ablution with water and sand, repeat a prayer almost naked, clothe himself with the Ihram or sacred garment, and sandals to defend the soles of his feet from the hot sand. So called spiritual meditation is now the employment, worldly

occupations and pleasures being forbidden. Many are the ceremonies and observances of the days spent at Mecca. The offering of sacrifices on Mount Ararat, in commemoration of the offering up of Ishmael (not Isaac, according to Arab belief) by Abraham, and stoning the devil are two of the principal things of the pilgrimage at Mecca. The return of the pilgrim to his far away town and village is a time of general rejoicing.

ALMSGIVING.

One of the early Caliphs said "Prayer carries us half way to God, fasting brings us to the door of his palace, and alms procure us admission." A tenth part of the property which has been for twelve months in the possession of an individual is the demand on his charity by the Mohammedan law. The duty of almsgiving is not, however, considered to be performed in all its extent. The productions of corn fields, olive groves, and vineyards are not gathered in the East with minute scrupulosity. To the poor are assigned the gleanings. Mohammed permits his followers to enjoy corn, dates, olives, pomegranates, and all other blessings, but commands that in the harvest and vintage the poor shall have their share. A Mohammedan never refuses food to one that begs for such, and oftentimes accompanies the gift with a coin. On feast days they are unusually liberal.

MEDITATION.

The sacred book of the Mohammedans is

the Koran, believed to have been bound in sections in silk and adorned with gems. It contains the substance of Mohammed's pretended revelations from heaven, which were given to him in his yearly visits to a cave during the month called Rumathan. The substance of the revelations was inscribed on blade bones, leaves of the palm trees, and the skins of animals. A copy of these fragments was entrusted to the charge of one of Mohammed's favoured wives, and were eventually put into volume form. The Koran is divided into one hundred and fourteen chapters, and these again into verses. The Mohammedans are supposed never to touch or read this book without washing their hands, neither must it be held below the waist. The teachings of the Koran are many: No God but God; four angels of great importance, and so to be had in dread—Gabriel, Michael, Azriel, the angel of death, and Israfeel, the angel of the resurrection. Prophets and Scriptures, the latter of which contained God's will for man; but they have been entirely lost, and what now exists is only a fabrication written and framed to suit the Christian religion. The Koran teaches that Jesus the Son, not of God, but of Mary, was the last prophet of the Jews, the true Messiah, the worker of miracles, and preacher of righteousness, but the crucifixion is denied, Jesus escaped from the Jews and was caught up into heaven, and another in his form and image suffered on the Cross. Although the divinity and Atonement of Christ are



Temple at Petra, 87 feet high, carved in rock. Very rare photograph

denied, they do admit that he was born in a miraculous manner at the command of God. Thus it will be seen that in this so-called religion God's plan of salvation is ignored, and in its place nothing substituted. The Moslem, if honest, will admit that in his religion there is no salvation from sin, but comforts himself with the assurance "God is merciful—I will be as good as I can and leave the rest to Mohammed." A Paradise full of everything to satisfy the sensual gratification of the follower of the Koran is promised to him who faithfully observes the commands of God and his Prophet. In contradiction to the Seventh Day observed by the Jews and the first day kept by the Christians, the founder of Islam commanded that the Friday be set apart for worship and teaching, hence the name "Yowm-el-Jumma," the day of gathering. All that are able must attend the service at noonday to listen to the sermon given by the religious head of the place. In the towns of the East one can oftentimes see fishing nets spread over the entrance to a store, meaning that the keeper of the place is gone to prayers. This short sketch will give the reader a simple idea of the religion and requirements of Islam. Surely the conclusion must be that these people are as far from the salvation of God as the heathen of the islands of the sea, and are as much in need of the Gospel being preached to them as any other of the "all the world." "Pray ye therefore the Lord of

the harvest " for these who are in the bondage and darkness of Islam.

CUSTOMS.

It is not my purpose to enter into all the details of the everyday life and manners of the Arabs, but only to mention a few that stand out prominently among many others, which have their origin in the Scriptures. It is interesting to remember that although the foregoing are in daily practice, it is not because the people get their instructions from the Bible, with them it has been the custom for thousands of years, and has been passed down from generation to generation. The perusal of these things also makes the Bible very real and, without doubt, true. Being in close touch with these people of the East and the land of the Bible, gives special facility for the study of everyday life.

HIDING VALUABLES.

Gen. xxxv., 4: "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Joshua vii., 21: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the midst of my tent." Hidden treasure is always being found even in these days. One popular idea of the Arabs about a stranger coming among them is that he is seeking buried treasure,

and being in the possession of books knows just where to locate and find it. The custom of burying treasure and valuables was, no doubt, caused by the absence of any safe deposit with man in which to put things for keeping. Anything buried was only known to the hider, and it oftentimes happened that death or war carried off the depositor, and so his hoard was left to be turned up long years after. That this custom is still common will be substantiated by the following. In company with an Arab I was travelling over the Plains of Moab, my man had with him a revolver that he valued very much, and if it had been seen by the authorities it would have been taken from him. We saw coming toward us a body of men that we thought were Turkish soldiers—as they turned out to be. He was alarmed for his weapon, but was equal to the occasion: Coming on a large flat stone he sat down by it, and called me to do the same. I did so, and watched him. He carefully turned over the stone, scooped out a hole and put his revolver in it, then covered it with earth and replaced the stone as before. He told me at some future time he would get the weapon, which he did a month later. Another time when living in Kerak a man came to me begging some oilcloth and sealing wax to wrap a small bag of money in. He told me he was going out into the mountains to hide it, “I cannot trust my father, brother, or son to keep it, so am going

to put it in a safe place," he said; and away he went alone to hide his possessions.

RETAINING GARMENTS.

Exodus xxii., 26, 27: "If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it to him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering, it is his only covering, wherein shall he sleep."

Going to bed is a very simple matter with Arabs, more often than not the place where you may be reclining becomes your bed, Guest rooms and tents are bare of furniture, mats and rugs are spread, and on these we sleep. Nothing in the way of covering is provided, so that every one must possess his own. Here comes in the utility of the large cloak (abbah) of the Arab. When he wants to sleep it is capacious enough to cover him, and being closely woven keeps out the cold or wind. With one of these handy the sleeper can cover himself just where he happens to be. To keep a man's outer covering is a great crime, as I found out once by experience. It happened in Kerak. I was sitting in our room with my face toward the open door, when I saw a sheet that had been hung out to dry slowly disappear upwards. I ran out and up on to the roof of the house, and saw a man running off with the sheet under his arm. I gave chase and soon overtook him, but could not get hold of him because of his loose flying garments. I held on to his outer cloak, and finding he was likely to be

captured, he dropped the sheet and slipped his cloak, leaving it in my hands, he making off as hard as his legs could carry him. I returned to my room with sheet and cloak in my possession. This was about noon. Soon some men came asking the return of the cloak. I said the thief must come for it himself. Twice they applied, but I refused to give it to them. They told me I was doing wrong by retaining it, but I was ignorant of their custom then. Just before evening the Chief, with some of his sons, came and asked for the cloak, telling me that I was withholding the man's covering for the night, and if he died from exposure his blood would be upon me. They told me of their custom, and impressed me with the fact that by my action I was doing very wrong. So I gave up the garment, and have since learnt that custom with them is a thing not easily broken, even under such circumstances.

PRONUNCIATION.

Judges xii., 5, 6: "And the Gileadites took the fords of Jordan toward Ephraim: and it was so, that when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me go over, that the men said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, say now Shibboleth, and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right."

Here the distinguishing feature between these two tribes was not dress, action, or appearance but the pronunciation of certain words, and by this it was known if they were friend or foe. To-day a

man only has to speak, and by the pronunciation of certain words the listener can detect from what town or village he hails from. The pronunciation of Hebron is very different from that of Damascus, and even that of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, only about four miles apart, is very marked. It would be rude, on a stranger entering a guest or other room, to ask him where he is from; the Arabs wait until he begins to talk, and then from the words he uses and his pronunciation they can generally tell where he comes from. A smart man to conceal his native place will oftentimes use the terms of those he may be among for the time being.

HOSPITALITY.

Judges xix., 4, 5: "And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him, and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart," &c.

Every town and village among the Arabs is provided with a room, open for the accommodation of all comers—the stranger and the traveller. It is the pride of a settlement to have it said about it "Every house is a guest room." To the traveller these places are most valuable, affording as they do shelter for the night, protection from robbers, and provision for man and beast. The head man of the place generally likes to entertain the guests, although the humblest inhabitant will gladly provide food

and shelter for any that present themselves at their doors. A saying of the Arab runs thus: "The guest comes in the place of God, and we willingly give what he needs." The guest is entitled by custom to three days' hospitality, during that time he is supposed to be able to transact the business that has brought him to the place. The host likes to have his guests on hand early in the afternoon, so that the best supper possible may be prepared for them. Another saying runs, "The guest of the evening does not sup," because no time has been allowed to prepare for him, so he has to take what he can get. If circumstances keep a man in a place longer than three days, he must go to another house for accommodation. An Arab is judged by the way he treats his guests. "The coffee-pot is never off the fire" says a lot for a good host. Whilst under the roof or tent of an Arab, the belongings of a guest are considered safe, also his life. Great indignation was caused during my stay at Ithera because one evening my saddle bags were rifled. It was the duty of my host to find the thief or to replace my stolen goods, but I spared him the trouble. The person of the guest is also much respected, and no one, even an enemy, must molest him whilst under a host's roof. The story of Genesis xix., 1-11, is made plain, and the action of Lot understandable, when we remember the respect the Eastern has for his guest. Lot refused to give his guests to the howling Sodomites, offering to

them his two daughters, rather than expose his two visitors to the evil designs of the men of Sodom. I have oftentimes experienced the benefit of this custom, especially when assailed by the Turkish official, as recorded in another part of this book, he (my host) would rather offend a member of the Government than allow me, his guest, to be interfered with. (*See* pages 105, 106.)

A liberal host keeps his guests well supplied with coffee. This beverage taken without milk or sugar, has many little ways in being dealt with. No more than a tablespoonful must be given at a time, to fill one of the tiny cups would be an insult, and not more than two pourings out is allowed, if a third one is given it is a decided hint that the receiver is not wanted and had better get away as soon as possible, possibly because some enemy or the avenger of blood is near. This custom, however, only rules amongst some of the principle Bedouin tribes. The coffee is generally made by the host himself, on no account is a woman allowed to make it. The green berries are roasted in a kind of frying pan as required, and the average amount of coffee for a pint of water is about four ounces. More often than not one cup has to serve for a number of people, everyone drinks from the same cup without it being washed.

HASTY MEALS.

Genesis xii., 2-8; Judges vi., 19: In these two instances Abraham and Gideon had received un-

expected visitors. In Abraham's case he concluded that his visitors had been turned aside to his tent by hunger, v. 5 very plainly teaches this, "I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts, after that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come to your servant." A very real picture of Arab life and custom this. Food is never given the traveller early in the day. The first meal of the Arab is taken about ten o'clock, so that the journeyer would lose the best part of the day if he stayed for breakfast. If a village, encampment, or even tent is passed, it is quite permissible to turn aside and rest for a time and have some food. The Arab women are quick at getting a meal ready. Dough is kneaded and soon baked; whilst this is in process another is frying eggs, or melting some fat in which to dip the bread, whilst the old mother of the host or his eldest wife will be diving into the recesses of a sack or bundle of clothes for some very savory morsel wherewith to flavour the dish being prepared. If time permits a lamb or kid is brought in from the flock, killed, dissected, and cooked, and served up in a very short space of time. I remember well a hasty meal being prepared for me. It was in the country south of Beersheba. We had been riding nearly all day and were hungry. We saw a tent in the distance and were soon sitting in it. Coffee was made, bread baked, and a fairly good meal served up in about twenty-five minutes, and in a minute less than half an hour from the

time we had alighted at the tent we were on our way again. As soon as we have eaten from what has been provided we resume our journey. Hearty thanks would be ill-mannered, a hurried "May you always have plenty, if God will," is all the payment given for the kind ready hospitality of the willing giver.

FEASTING.

Genesis xxi. 8 ; xxix. 22, and 27 ; l. 10 ; Judges xiv. 12 ; Esther i. 5 ; Job ii. 13.

These Scriptures all bear on feasts held on occasions of weddings, death, or some other time prominent in the lives of those mentioned. The reader will note that the limit of the time for rejoicing or otherwise was seven days, and that time is still observed among the Arabs of both village, town, or desert. It may not be out of place to briefly describe the mode of procedure on these occasions. First, we read of a feast being made on the day that Isaac was weaned. A child is rarely weaned under two years of age, oftentimes a child even at three years may be seen at the breast. Having attained the age of two years the child, especially a boy, is supposed to be able to do without nourishment from its mother and to take solid food enough to sustain it. It has passed through the first stage of life, and having lived to enter the second stage, it becomes a time of rejoicing. The relations and near friends are invited in to a meal, then the neighbours and any others that may be around, even

strangers, are all given an open invitation to come in, feast, and rejoice with the parents because their child has been weaned. This is kept up for seven days, and is no small expense to the family, although made lighter by presents in kind to the fortunate child passing into a fresh state of its existence.

Other of the references given refer to times of mourning. The Easterns do not keep their dead long after death. Climatic influences are against that custom. On the approach of death some of the male members of the family go out to dig a grave. Immediately after death the body is washed with warm water, wrapped in a new shroud, and carried out to be buried.

Instances sometimes occur that persons are buried before they are dead ; having gone off into a state of collapse the watchers conclude that death has taken place. I well remember a case that occurred in Kerak of a woman that was buried and resurrected. She had been ill and suddenly collapsed ; the relatives, thinking she was dead, carried her out and buried her before the husband, who was away, knew what had occurred. On his return he went to the grave, and as he sat by it thought he heard moaning. He scraped away the earth and stones and found his supposed dead partner alive and able to speak. The earth is kept off the body by means of slabs of stone laid crossways on other stones. The woman was taken back to her home and recovered, and as far as I know is still alive. I have seen her many times

and talked with her. After that I had many calls to examine persons to see if they were really dead, the natives having great faith in the stethoscope, or as they call it, "The Scales of Life."

The short time that has elapsed between death and burial has been so occupied with other things that mourning to any extent has been excluded, but on returning to the house or tent, the voice of mourning is at once heard. The men—for a man, not a woman—will give way to chanting the praises and virtue of the dead one; the women will gather in the yard, or on the roof of the house recently bereaved. They will join hands and form themselves into a ring, one in the centre will compose lines on the dead one, this will in turn be taken up by the others and sung in unison, every few stanzas they will dance round in a circle, the time and harmony they keep being quite remarkable. On these getting weary another batch will take their place, and so this goes on from early morning until past midnight. The immediate relatives of the dead will visit the grave and wail and mourn there. These observances are kept up for seven days, during which time outsiders keep the bereaved family supplied with food, thus enabling them to be free for the mourning. If an important personage, such as a Chief or religious head, dies, the usual mourning not only takes place, but all business and work is suspended for seven days. I had practical proof of this on the death of my wife in Kerak. We could not understand why

the Arabs shunned us at such a time. It was very noticeable that those that were most friendly to us did not come near. After a time they visited us again, and on being asked where they had been during some days they replied, "We have spent the days in our houses mourning the death of the lady; we did not know your custom at such a time, so have stopped work, shut our shops, and mourned according to our own way." The Arabs east of the Jordan have another custom which shows a kindly feeling one towards another. If a man's horse dies (next to his eldest son, his best companion) his neighbour will bring in another horse and put it in the stall of the dead one and allow it to remain seven days, thinking in some measure to make up for the loss of the dead animal. The women also do something similar when a baby dies. A relation or friend will give the bereaved mother their baby to nurse and care for during seven days, in that time the parent is supposed to become reconciled to her loss. Memory calls up a touching incident that occurred in our domestic life in Moab. Soon after our advent into that land my wife had the misfortune to lose a little one. It soon became known and the women were very grieved about it. A day or two after a young Chief that had always been kindly disposed towards us presented himself at our door. I asked him in, he entered, and from under his cloak brought a tiny white lamb. He put it into my wife's arms saying, "I am sorry for your loss, and if I had a baby would

have lent it to you to care for, until you had got over your grief; I had this lamb, so have brought it for you to look after, feed, and care for." He then went away and next time I saw him he was dead, having been cruelly murdered by a hostile tribe near by. A month of mourning was observed for him, because he was so brave and generous and such a favourite with all the people. Not only in the country is seven days the time for mourning, but also in the towns of Palestine and Syria.

Marriages are times for rejoicing and feasting, always of seven days duration. The week previous to the union of the two parties is wholly given up by the families of each one to pleasure. The bride and bridegroom, each in their own homes, are isolated in separate apartments to receive the congratulations and presents of relatives, friends and neighbours. The males do not visit among the women, that would be a great breach of etiquette. "Every kind loves its kind," an Arab proverb, finds its place at these times. Outside, for seven days, continual feasting and coffee drinking is going on. In a good family, twenty or twenty-five sheep will be slain to provide food for the visitors who come to rejoice with the family; in addition to these, quantities of rice and wheat will be cooked to fill up the corners. Fat and grease in abundance speaks much for the liberality of the contending families. Inside, among the women, the shy bride has to undergo daily washings and purifications to

prepare her for the bridegroom. This is the only good washing she gets during lifetime, so a very important time for her, and an arduous one for those told off to scrub her. The bridegroom does not get off without his share of scrubbing, in addition he is smoked with various perfumes to make him sweet. At the end of the seven days rejoicings, a short religious service brings a week of hard work to a close. The circumcision of a boy is also a time of rejoicing among both sexes. Enough has been said to show that the seven days of the Bible has in no way been shortened, proving how slow has been the advance of civilization among the descendants of Ishmael. Truly "They dwell alone."—Jeremiah xlix. 31.

BUYING LAND.

Genesis xxiii. 17: "And the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in the borders thereof, were made sure unto Abraham."

It is very noticeable how particular the patriarch was in making this bargain. He might have bought the field, thinking that with it he was buying all that it contained, but on coming into possession, and going to prepare the cave for his dead, he would have been stopped by the late owner, and told "you only bought the field, not the cave or trees that are in the field." So Abraham, in the deeds, had all in the field and the borders thereof made sure to him by being written down. It is a common thing

in the East for a man to own a well in the middle of a garden or field that belongs to someone else. The well was found by the man who had bought the ground, and not having been specified in the deeds, the well, according to custom, belongs to the former owner of the land. So in buying land from the Arabs some such terms as the following are used:—"A buys from B land in such a place, also all that can be seen on the land, trees and stones, also all that shall be found under the ground." This secures to the purchaser all that he finds, even treasure. This custom makes Abraham's action very understandable. An ignoramus would soon be taken in at buying land in the East; the seller would keep quiet so as to get a double benefit. This transaction, we read, took place in the presence of witnesses, a very needy precaution in a land and among a people that do not consider lying or cheating a sin, and where writing and documents are almost unknown.

Lev. xix. 14: "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind," is strictly observed by the Arabs of to-day. Anyone afflicted is the object of pity and special care, and many of the mistakes made by any that are afflicted are always overlooked because of their infirmity.

Deut. xxiv. 20: "When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow,"



Aaron's Tomb on Mount Hor in Edom. Very rare photograph.

This command given to the children of Israel three thousand years ago is still obeyed by the fortunate possessors of olive trees. The olive harvest commences in November. The natives go to the groves armed with sticks or bamboos, ladders, baskets, and sacks. Some of the men go up into the tree, and give it a good beating, causing the berries to fall on the ground, the women and children are busy picking them up and putting them in sacks and baskets. A return to the tree is not made, what is left on or under it is for the poor, who come along and gather what has been left. The olive forms part of the food of the Eastern, and a family owning one or two olive trees is fortunate indeed.

Deut. xxiii. 24, 25 : "When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat thy fill at thy own pleasure, but thou shall not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand ; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn."

To eat grapes, or parch nearly ripe corn is quite permissible in the gardens or fields of the Arabs; none will forbid you, but you must carry none home, except it be given you.

GRINDING AT THE MILL.

Part of a woman's work is to grind the flour for daily use. No house or tent is without its hand-mill, and although everything else was stolen or

bought from a dwelling or family, Deut. xxiv. 6 would be strictly observed, "No man shall take the mill to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge." An expression of hard times is conveyed by saying, "The mill is silent," meaning, of course, that there is nothing to grind. House mills are of two kinds, those turned by the women and those turned by a donkey. In the latter case the beast is blindfolded so that he may not become giddy by having to go round a circle. It is considered a disgrace for a man to grind at the mill, hence the humiliating spectacle of Samson at the mill in the prison house, fitted for such work by having had his eyes put out.

YEARLY LAMENTATIONS.

Judges xi., 39: "And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughters of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in a year." Visits to shrines form an important part in the life of an Arab. Every district has a shrine devoted to some saint or great personage that was supposed to have had special power in bestowing special blessings. These places are called "meezars or willeys," anything deposited near them is perfectly safe—supposed to be under the protection of the saint of the shrine. It is quite a common sight to see tents, sacks of corn, ploughs, &c., left near these places; no one would risk the wrath of the spirit by removing any of these deposits. Yearly visits are made to these shrines, and special blessings asked upon the family or flocks of the

visitor, sacrifices are offered, and the blood of the victim smeared over the doorposts and lintel of the building covering the shrine.

The most important shrine in the country south of Palestine is that of Aaron, son of Amran, brother of Moses, and High Priest of Israel. It is on the summit of Mount Hor, in Mount Seir, away in the desolate land of Edom. I am one of the two possessors of the only negatives of this important place and much revered shrine. The Arabs are much afraid of Aaron, and do all they can to keep in his favour. Another shrine in Moab is much frequented by barren women, who believe that the saint buried there has power to intercede with God, and comply with the request for children. Vows are made at these places, and generally kept by the one that makes them. This brief account of ancient customs, still observed by these neglected Arab tribes, ought to increase the interest in these people of Bible lands and manners. Much more could be written about their every-day doings. That itself would require a volume. It must be left for some better writer to take up the task, and we will take up another feature of life—as a missionary among the Arabs of tent and town.

CHAPTER XI.

Discouragements versus Encouragements and Otherwise.

M ISSION work of every kind in all lands is always accompanied by times of discouragement. That the former are allowed by God it cannot be doubted, but all admit that these times do come, and are oftentimes blessings in disguise, although not always discerned at the moment. Without such times coming into our lives there might be danger of pride or self-exaltation over any little success that was attending our work ; and so these discouragements occur, maybe sometimes to remind us that, "not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord," all success in our labours is brought about. Again, discouragement may teach us many lessons and enable us to gain valuable experience which otherwise we would not have gained, and thus, temporary discouragement may result in lasting blessing, not only to individuals but also to communities. New work in out-of-the-

way places among a strange and ignorant people always finds much to discourage. The idea in the mind of the Arab is that you are among them for personal benefit to yourself and not to them. The monarch of the nation you represent has sent you among them, and is paying you a heavy sum to stay among a hard and degraded people, or, as was often told me, I must have killed someone or committed a great crime to cause me to leave my own land and settle among the Arabs. Such opinions as these from those who you are trying to benefit are neither helpful or encouraging, rather the reverse, and oftentimes one is sorely tempted to leave the people to their foolish imaginations and go elsewhere.

Perhaps, some of the greatest discouragements I had was in connection with the medical work at Kerak. Although the Arabs there were ready enough to apply to us in time of need, it was with difficulty that we could get them to exercise patience for any length of time. Medical or surgical aid from us was supposed to have an instantaneous effect on the patient, and if it did not, very little persuasion was needed to put away the unknown remedy or treatment, and apply one that was suggested by the women near by. The native doctor was our greatest hindrance, no doubt because he was jealous for his craft, and although the natives acknowledged that our way was best and our medicines more effective, yet they preferred oftentimes to

pay the native quack a heavy fee for some visible and painful application rather than have our untried, slow-restoring remedies free.

They could not understand why, for a bad headache, they should have medicine given them to drink. Why not do like the native doctor, apply a hot iron or a bleeding glass to the spot and so scare away the pain. What good liquids did for medicine when fever was in the system could not be understood. Fire and blood-taking with a few dangerous drugs are the remedies for everything among the Arabs. To wash a wound and allow it air or drainage was madness, even sin, on my part; they would plaster it with filth and exclude air, and thus, instead of improving matters, make them far worse. Rest and quiet is rarely permitted to a patient, on the contrary, the room, or tent, of the sick man will be crowded with men, women and children making plenty of noise. I have known many a one die that might have lived if only our advice had been carried out.

One case in particular comes to my mind even as I write. One noon, I was having my meal when a man ran into my room breathless, exclaiming—"Come—run—quick; a man murdered!" I jumped up, seized my emergency bag, and without coat or waistcoat followed the messenger. Up in the city, lying in the road in the midst of a crowd was a man in a pool of blood. He had been attacked from behind by the avenger of blood, and his abdomen

ripped across causing his intestines to protrude. I set to work alone, no man cared to interfere lest the poor fellow should die and they get the blame, carefully I stitched up the gash, replacing the protruding mass as I proceeded; the fellow behaved well and kept up beautifully. Having finished, he was carried on a carpet into a house near by and was supposed to remain there. I persuaded the men to go away and leave him to get sleep and quiet and having given him a sedative I went away, promising to return in an hour. I did so, but found the house fastened up. Inquiring of some people near, I was told the owners of the house had gone out to their tents, and the wounded man had been helped to walk to another house. Thither I went, to find the place crowded, and the poor fellow exhausted, yet being kept awake to talk by these so-called friends. I scolded them and sent them all out, and decided to stay myself. Soon he was asleep and rested quietly for two hours. On waking I left him in charge of a woman to go to another case, promising to return and possibly have him taken to my room so that he might be well cared for. I returned about sunset, and to my astonishment found my man was not in the house I left him in. The woman very coolly told me "We feared he would die, and did not want it to be under our roof. You will find him in ——'s house." Off I went and found him again, but he was too low to be moved; they told me he could not walk, so they

had put him on a donkey. I saw the poor fellow was very low, so stayed with him until he died, which happened about three hours later. Truly "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." I went home disheartened, but had learnt a lesson never to be forgotten.

On another occasion I was called to a young man that had violent fever. The native doctor and the women had done all they knew, but to no effect. I went and listened to all they had to tell me, then I told them if they would leave off treating him I would do what I could. They agreed, and for some days all went well, but the patient was not up and about as they expected he would be. One morning I went as usual, but got a cold reception, I guessed something was up; I gave the medicine and left them. A little later on I returned and gave them a surprise visit. Before I reached the door I heard cries of pain, so waited a minute, then crept gently to the door and looked in. I saw my patient being held up by three or four men whilst others applied hot irons to his spine, causing him to yell from pain. So intent were the men and women on their cruel work that they had not noticed me, so when I spoke they were surprised, though not ashamed of their doings. The excuse they made was "he had a pain in his back, so we were driving it away." After that I left them a few days, but returned again to treat both back and fever. The young man recovered and was always very grateful.

Another time a young baby was brought to us for treatment, "because it cried"; something was given it, more to please the mother than anything else—for babies will cry—and away they went, and we heard no more of them. Some days after I was in the encampment of our Sheikh and was asked to look at a baby that was ill. It was brought to me; on uncovering the mite I found it was quite raw and of a dark colour. I asked what they had been doing to it to make it in such a condition. The answer was, "because it cried we rubbed it with the medicine you gave the Chief to paint his knee with but it did not profit." Some time before I had given the old Chief some liniment Iodine for a swollen knee, and they thought what was good for that, was good for a crying baby. Needless to say a little grave was the result of such treatment. On me it had a good effect, that of discouraging the giving of medicine or drugs into the hands of those ignorant of their use, and unwilling to use them as directed.

Our patience was sorely tried by another family that we did our best to serve. A man was cleaning his loaded pistol with his little seven-year old girl near to him; suddenly it went off, the charge entering the little maid's thigh. Our help was asked and willingly given, one of our lady helpers going twice a day to dress the wound and do what was necessary for the little sufferer. One morning she went as usual and applied clean dressings. The

afternoon visit revealed a different state of affairs. The fresh dressings had all been removed, and in their place a plaster of various abominations had been put. An old woman, supposed to be very clever, had advised this, and so it had been done, and a fee given for the advice and plaster. The parents were talked to about their foolish doings, but to little effect. Patiently the dirty plaster was removed, the wound cleansed and dressed once more. All went well for a few days, when again the good done was all upset. A knuckle bone (supposed to work wonderful cures) had been worked into the wound, causing the little girl excruciating pain as well as opening the wound again. Here, then, was undone all the patient care and attention of weeks past. The reason given was "that the native doctor said there was blood and matter inside that ought to come out," and they had listened and acted accordingly. So discouraged were we that we refused to take the case up again, unless they paid for the dressings and trouble, which they did, but the child is lame, owing no doubt to the attack on the wound with the knuckle bone.

One more instance must suffice, but although discouraging and trying to the human being, yet it eventually made us some good friends from among those that had been our greatest tormentors and hinderers. Our Chiefs had gone on "ghuzzu" (a plundering expedition), and in a skirmish the eldest son of our Sheikh, and heir to the Chieftainship,

was badly wounded in the head, the scalp being badly cut by a sword. I was called out to attend him in his tent in an encampment about three hours ride from Kerak. I found an ugly wound full of ground coffee and flour, that had been mixed and stuffed into the cut "to keep out the cold." It was fixed in like cement, but by dint of patient working I gradually removed it, much to the objection of the interested onlookers. Doing what I could during the few days that I stopped, I was able at last to leave him, promising on the third day to return and see him. They promised me they would not interfere in any way.

The third morning I rode out, it was snowing, but I wanted to keep my word. I reached the tent, tied up my horse, and before anyone was aware of it I had pushed aside the tent cloth and entered. What did I see? The native doctor at the head of my patient putting on a plaster made of donkey's manure and cow's urine! I stood and looked, no one spoke. I went over to the patient, calmly took the plaster off his head and put it on the fire, then told the native quack to get outside at once. Without a word he obeyed. Then they told me my medicine had not cured the man so they had called in the other and paid him five mejedies (about 18s.) for his supposed cure. I pretended to make for my horse to leave them, but they begged me to stay and do something; all the lint, bandages, and ointment I had left had been burnt by the quack's orders, so I

could do little but again cleanse the cut of the filth of the past two days. Three times they served me thus, but in the long run I won, and the fellow got about again. The ride through the snow storm impressed them, made because I would not break my promise to be with them on the third morning. The recovery of the young Chief was attributed to my careful and wise treatment, and many of that family became favorably disposed toward us.

The foregoing have all been connected with a people hardly semi-civilized, and so in some way to be pitied for their ignorance and treatment toward those who wanted to help and befriend them, but the time came when heavier burdens in the way of discouragements had to be borne, from those who are supposed to be civilized and rank with the nations of Europe. When the Turk laid claim to Kerak, and put a garrison and civil governor there, he did his utmost to crush us as well as hinder us. The first action he took was two-fold—the closing of the Mission School and stopping the medical aid given to the poor people 'as they gathered in my porch every morning. This was followed by a long term of close watching by Turkish soldiers set at our doors to turn away all comers to us, and then by two soldiers specially set apart to follow us everywhere we went, and report all we did, even into whose house we entered. The new buildings, commenced before the coming of the Turk, were again and again put a stop to by troops being sent to

forcibly take away the workmen's tools and whip them off the ground. As often as they stopped us I regained the tools and resumed work, and at length after two years of such discouragements I finished the task I had set out on. Perhaps the greatest discouragement in my missionary career came when those, even more civilized and enlightened than even Turk or Arab, caused me to leave the land, people, and work I had through much tribulation learned to love, because my religious views were not exactly like theirs, and I could not with a clear conscience leave the Church of my boyhood and join theirs. But for the grace of God I would have gone back to the world heartily discouraged and disgusted with those that ought to be above such actions. But every life and work has two sides, and as the blessings and benefits of daily life far outnumber the trials and temptations, so in such a work in which I have engaged the encouragements and kindnesses put the other side in the background. Was it no encouragement to me, after I had lain weeks with small-pox in Kerak to know that two dark-skinned, outwardly heartless Arabs had watched faithfully by my camp-bed every night of that long illness, so that my fellow-worker might have her night's rest, and also to be told that dwellers in the deserts and mountains of Moab had travelled long distances on hearing of my illness to come and just enquire for me, and when everyone thought every hour might be my last, the men and women lingered about the

door begging to be allowed only to step inside and just look, not speak, at the one who they said "had come into their homes when everyone else shunned them for fear of disease"; and then, when the turn toward health and strength at last came, was it no encouragement to see the people coming with their thank-offerings given out of full and thankful hearts—such things as bread, eggs, fruit, milk, fuel, and such like—all proving real gratitude for any services rendered them even under trying circumstances. Or was it no encouragement or help to bear in mind that a party of Arab boys taught in our school to pray, were daily remembering me when out among the Bedouin. If only those riper in years and experience were as faithful in backing up the worker in far away lands by their prayers, how encouraged many a weary one would be, instead of feeling that he was alone in the work. Was there not encouragement in the fact that whereas an Arab would not trust his best friend or nearest relation with money or anything he valued, yet they would come voluntarily and deposit any quantity with me without even thinking of asking for a receipt or paper of any kind. Surely it was a matter for thankfulness, and one full of encouragement, that when fighting took place between the Keraky and Turkish troops, and men were shot down before my eyes that I had known for years, their wives and children came to us for shelter and deliverance, feeling perfectly secure and safe under our roof; and then, when they had to

leave for their work in the open fields or gardens, to have them put for safe keeping, their few jewels and trinkets with us. And then at last when the news spread that I was leaving, they came and beseeched that we would not leave them for good, as they had no one but us to turn to for help in trouble, threatening that they would stop us setting out, which, to prevent, we did one morning at dawn.

Later years have not been without signs of encouragement. One day a young Arab presented himself at our door in Jerusalem, saying he had brought his father to us for treatment. He had come more than a hundred miles, proving that some amount of faith in our methods had resulted from our life and work at Moab. Was it no cause for joy to us when the old Chief of Moab who in one day was bereft of two of his sons, chose to turn aside to us for comfort and cheer rather than be among the howling crowd from his own relations and people. That man had been one of those that had caused me to be taken prisoner, and money paid for my release when first I entered Moab.

The account of my journey into Arabia, given in other chapters, cannot be read without seeing between the lines much that encourages us to press forward; the readiness of the people to buy the Scriptures, the kindness shown by those in high places, and last but not least the workings of a watchful, kind, and gracious Providence, always

bringing to mind the remembrance that "The Lord reigneth," and that His Word says, "I will be exalted among the nations." If any worker in either the home or foreign field that reads these pages is discouraged, let him take to himself the promises that cannot be broken, and go forward remembering that the "Well done" is not promised to the good and successful worker, but to the good and *Faithful* servant, who is to enter into the joy of His Lord. Walking down the street called Straight, in Damascus, a man accosted me that I had no memory of. He was surprised I did not recognize him. "You attended me in an encampment away in Moab when I had been shot in the neck, and when I left for my own place and people you gave me one of your Gospels. We have all read it and like it very much," was what he told me. Before leaving me he asked me to come among them and tell them of our religion.

Many instances like the foregoing could be cited, but what has been chronicled must suffice. The return to the homeland has brought me in touch with some kind earnest friends, doing their utmost to help forward the great missionary enterprise committed to the Church, but even in England one could even get discouraged by the indifference, spirit of misgiving, lack of interest, and unwillingness to support by prayer and means those that represent the home section of the Church. Oh for a return to the days when, because of the ready giving and

willingness of God's people, it had to be proclaimed, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the Lord's work, for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work, and too much." Little loving leads to little giving, much loving to much giving. If the Lord's people kept the treasury full the servant would not so oftentimes be discouraged by the lack of funds to carry on his work. May the time soon come when from the homeland may go forth such a flood of prayer and liberality that the discouragements from strange people (ofttimes to be excused by their ignorance) may be lost sight of in the joy of both sender and goer into the great harvest field. The "otherwise" of this chapter will no doubt prove interesting to some at least into whose hands these writings may fall.

On my return from the journey into Arabia our Local Committee recommended that for six months I stay in Jerusalem, and help build up the work in that city. A man was badly needed to lead any aggressive movement. Feeling it to be the Lord's will I willingly consented to do my best to strengthen the stakes already driven in and, if possible, to plant some more. Our Sunday School for the natives was given some attention. This was being attended by Christians of many creeds, most of them having only a name to live, being under ignorant and crafty priests. What could be expected from the followers of such leaders. The average attendance was sixty, the lack of accom-

modation was sorely felt, and no doubt kept more from coming to us than if we had a suitable place for such a work. Classes were sent away into study, store-room, or dining-room, anywhere to be separated. Following the school came a service in English on Free Church lines, open to all comers, this being held in what might be styled the sitting room of our Mission house, which in summer proved too hot, and in winter too cold, not being able to properly ventilate it. This meeting was fairly well attended, and was the means of blessing to many. It was suggested to me that we try and reach the outcasts of Jerusalem—beggars, lame, blind and halt, that no one had any interest in or cared about. A call was made on them during their hours and places of business, the waysides near the city, where they sat begging, as did Bartameus long ago. The result of the canvas was that many said if a meeting was held at sunrise they would come. Later than that they could not attend the heat would be too much for the weak ones, and their professions must not be neglected, as this was their only means of livelihood. So it was settled for Thursday mornings at six o'clock. The first meeting there were only three present, but as the weeks came round the numbers gradually increased until eighty was reached. Then the hall of our house was too small, and it became necessary to divide the meeting, so the women came on Tuesdays, and the men continued to assemble on Thursdays.

Such a motley dirty crowd it would be hard to imagine, soap and water being scarce they were not always the cleanest, or as sweet smelling as we would desire. To watch the poor things assembling was pitiful yet interesting. The lame being carried on the backs of their more fortunate companions hardly able to bear their own burden; the partly blind leading the totally bereft of sight; some getting along with the aid of home-made crutches; and others, from sundry causes, reduced to the profession of the wayside. The most cheering feature of the assembly was that nearly all were Moslems that attended. Our service for one hour was conducted as follows: Whilst they all remained seated on the floor a short prayer was offered, followed by the Lord's Prayer in which all joined that knew it. Then a short portion was read and in the simplest way expounded, some one truth being pressed home on them. Then a verse on Salvation, or a short prayer was taught them, and the meeting was closed by asking God's blessing on the spoken Word. A cup of coffee and a halfpenny compensated them each for any fatigue or loss in business they had endured. These meetings gave us much encouragement. Since coming home a message from one of the old beggars was sent me to the effect that since he had come to the meeting he was not afraid to die because his sins had been washed away by the blood of Jesus.

As we meet them by the roadside they oftentimes repeat to us the things they have heard at some of

the gatherings. We do ask prayer that many of these outcasts, for whom Jesus died, may accept Him in all simplicity and truth and live up to the light they have. After they have dispersed, the hall in which they met gets a good wash out to cleanse it from the numerous vermin and abomination left behind. Here is mission work under difficulty, and I hope to find some of the Lord's stewards that will help erect a building that would provide suitable accommodation for these various phases of work in which we are engaged. Who will help do this? What better memorial for an individual community or church than to erect such a building for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in the land and city of our Saviour himself, and so give the missionaries a better chance of doing the work—the work to which they have devoted their lives. Space forbids anything being written about the visits to the poor loathsome, repulsive lepers away in their isolated huts in the valley of the Kedron. This work was thrust into my hands, and I counted it a privilege for Christ's sake to minister even to these. I have written enough to show that any man or woman wholly given up to God's service can be used in a way unthought of, and the most unlearned, unlikely individual baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost may become a barley loaf in the camp of the enemy. God still chooses the foolish to confound the wise, the weak to confound the mighty, the

base and despised things, and even things that are not, to bring to nought things that are.

Experience has proved it to be so in the life of one at least, and to God be the praise.

Yours for Christ and Ishmael,
ARCHIBALD FORDER.

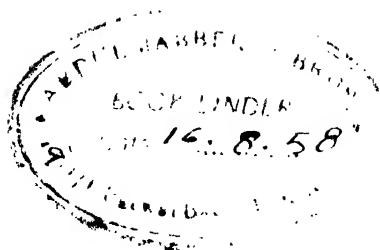
CONCLUSION

WHAT has been written might all be summed up in one sentence, viz., "The Lord hath done great things, whereof we are glad," but instead of resting content and living on the past, it is my desire to go and follow up what has so far been accomplished. Compared with the extent of Arabia and the need of its people very little has been done. I am in the homeland for a time, brought here by circumstances over which I had no control, and yet, I doubt not, led back here by the same guidance that has directed my way in the past. Not a few have been stirred up to fresh and renewed interest in Ishmael and the land of their wanderings. But this would avail little if we stopped there. "Forward, Advance," must be our cry and to every reader of, and listener to the contents of these pages comes the challenge of three thousand years ago when God's work needed helpers: "Who, then, offereth willingly his service this day unto the Lord." To every individual has been given something that can be utilized in the Lord's work. Ourselves, talents, capabilities, gifts, and prayers are a few of the services that could be offered

to the Lord for the purpose of carrying on His work, and extending the Kingdom and knowledge of our God and His Son, "Whose we are and Whom we serve." Some sorrow of heart, for the work's sake, has been caused during the writing of these pages by receiving from the Board in New York a letter to say that for various reasons they had decided to suspend the work and worker. Here, then, more than ever, comes the call to every one to be up and doing, "Working whilst it is called day, for the night cometh when no man can work." "Helping together by prayer," so that this work may be taken up again with more vigour than ever before, each doing with our might what lies in our power, so that it may never be said of any of us "Curse me———, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord among the mighty."

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